



Helping Families in Need Society

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Christmas 2010

Dear Friends,

ANOTHER BIG WOW! Yet another holiday season breaking all records set in the past. You overwhelmed us with your generosity...TOYS...TOYS and more TOYS, certificates, groceries, gifts and money. We can't thank you enough for making December 2010 memorable for so many. 100% of your donations went directly to help those in need. Just look at what we were able to do with your donations.....

We provided 2 recovery house with gifts for 30 ladies and toys for their 21 children. We helped the wonderful people at the Kettle Friendship Society. We supplied 85 men and 70 women gifts for the Christmas Day drop in dinner, 28 gifts for their group homes and 35 gifts for their independent living individuals. We dropped off 20 fresh turkeys complete with cooking instructions and roasting pans to families around the lower mainland. We delivered gifts, clothing, groceries and cleaning supplies to 132 families. With the generous support of the Burnaby Optimists we provided another 22 families with gifts and grocery certificates. We helped two local elementary schools who were collectively helping 40 families. We gave toys for their 80 plus kids and gifts of food and more for the families. We gave big bags full of toiletries and candy to our friends at Fraserside in New West. We gave loads of candy and toothbrushes with toothpaste to Progressive Housing to pass out to their homeless and needy clients.

We were able to answer every call for help this December. Once again we couldn't believe that the larger charities were asking us for help. Ray personally met with everyone who was referred to us, gathered information and put plans in place to help them all. No one was turned away. A huge thank you once again to our special friend Ev, who personally put together over 250 gifts with help from her family and friends, despite her horrendous shoulder injury and surgeries. Her bags for the ladies are filled with makeup, toiletries, towels, dish cloths and wash cloths, along with gloves and a hand made scarf. Her gifts of socks, gloves and toiletries were perfect for the men on our list. Carmanah employees held a food drive for us. 32 families shared the non perishable food items that we collected from them and others. Once again thank you to our wonderful friends at TELUS who come through for us year after year. Thanks also to everyone who adopted a family and shopped for us. Anne Lissett, Joselyn, Olympia, Sandra, Dina, Nelda, Trina, Fawzia, Carina, Taya, Maria, Miriam, Sybil, Shabana, Heather, Marcie, Deanna, Mara, Jen and Jean have already called with big thank yous. "You guys are great!!" "You have no idea what these gifts mean to me" "I was worried about Christmas this year but after seeing what you brought us it felt so wonderful" "There really is a Santa Claus", "I can't believe you guys". More thanks you's have come in from so many othersas the list grows longer every day.

FAVOURITE TOY THIS YEAR...there were so many. There was the talking "Chuck the dump truck" again the Lego that falls out of the boxes, the pretty Barbie dolls and the wonderful big stuffed pink dog that sat up front in the truck with Ray. WOW HOV lane here we come! There were also the "Shake and Go" cars by Fisher Price! Every bump in the road started up more than half of the 144 cars with a big engine roar. Just like the start of the Indianapolis 500! Frightening the first time and then just a great big headache for Ray. I was surprised that they made it to the warehouse. I was thinking they might be found along the side of the road somewhere.

Our party for the women and children from Dixon Transition Society was a huge hit again this year. Raylene and Kathleen took pictures while Ray gave out grocery certificates and gifts to the Moms. Roxy is of course kept busy organizing everything, while Shelley, Lynne, Gladys, Moe, Carol and Muriel handled the play money sales in the market area. Santa arrived safely by fire truck. The firefighters stayed on to check out our party and were quite impressed with the work that we do and the fun event that we put on. Thanks Santa Mike! He stayed long enough to give out over 71 gifts to the kids. He took time to talk to each one and posed for pictures as well. Great food; pizza by Viva Sue and wonderful pastries provided by Mrs. Plumb. We had our entertainment again this year including the opportunity for us all to join in the singing using the microphone. The weather was great and the whole party went off without a problem. Many thanks to the volunteers from Dixon Society who came to help!

Ray took three Moms to the mall to shop for clothing for themselves. Each Mom brought along a friend for support with one Mom bringing her twin 18 month old girls and 4 year old boy. The ladies were surprised at how much Ray loves to shop. Big, big thank yous from all.

You know how the food bank commercials on the radio always say that they can buy 10 times more food with your money well here is my Ray stretching a dollar story...one of our clients has had such bad luck with our donated TVs. She had already lugged home 3 all of which lasted only a few weeks and then died. Just before Christmas the TV died again leaving the kids without a TV for Christmas vacation. So Ray goes on the internet (yes the internet) to get prices on TVs. He ends up going to Sears where he gets the best price on a 32". He shows me the bill and I can't believe it's so cheap. Remember when TVs cost thousands? Well I remember that I have a \$40 Sears Advantage coupon and send Ray back to get the credit. Now it's after Christmas and the TV comes on sale for a lower price so back Ray goes to Sears to get his credit. With taxes I think Ray spent around \$289. WOW! The family was overwhelmed and yes the TV is still working!



The toys from the BC Sheet Metal Association Christmas party were fantastic as always. 4 huge bins full! Our new son-in-law Stephen accompanied Ray on the pick up. Ray and I see Stephen as not just a new son-in-law but a new volunteer for the charity. Many people took advantage of our Christmas Wish Tree and provided gifts for that special someone. We really missed the gifts that Coast Paper has collected for so many year. They chose not to do it this year due to the economy. VANCITY Brentwood Branch took over and out did themselves helping so many families. With the support of their customers and staff so many families got great toys and gifts for the Moms. Family, friends and business clients also came through for us with their generosity. We were recently connected to VANCITY North Burnaby Branch who came through with a generous donation of cash and children's clothing. We look forward to continuing this new relationship throughout 2011. VANCITY branches are great supporters of community charities. Thanks to Arlene and friends for their toy collection again this year and thanks to the Burnaby Douglas Conservatives who collected toys.. Every family on our list was taken care of in grand style.

We lost our connection to donations from London Drugs this past year as their new policy demands that the items be thrown out. What a shame! We helped so many in the past with their donations. But where we lose the connection with one business we seem to make up for it with new connections and new interest in what we do. How Ray loves to talk about the charity and what he can do with help from those he meets.

More thanks to Roy at Roy's Copier Service for his continued support. Nintendo Canada also came through for us again. We have been kept busy distributing their generous donation of Giants hockey game tickets. Our new friends at the Central Park Business Centre gathered gifts for two families. Special thanks to Don and Barbara Copan who have supported the charity for so many years. Thanks also to Rick and Tracey Scurfield for their ongoing support.

Our own volunteers were asked to provide the names of people that they personally knew who could use a little extra help this Christmas. Another huge list of wishes were fulfilled. We sure don't have much of anything left over this year but we will continue to try to grant some birthday wishes in 2011.

We kept the charity open an extra two Monday nights in December so that we could help as many families as possible before Christmas. We also kept monitoring the phone lines and received two very generous donations of furniture and household goods from movie production companies.

We are always asked about double dipping and how we know the families are in need and do we get thanked. What sets us apart from other charities is that Ray personally meets with each and every family referred to us, so yes he knows that they are in need of help. He sees no double dipping but remarks all the time that even if they double dipped and got help from elsewhere too it would mean so much to them. Their need is so great. Our thank yous this year include; cards, letters, family photos, children's colouring pages, phone calls, cookies and cakes, hugs, tears, candy and genuine outpourings of love.

Ray has parked his sleigh and is taking a much needed long nap....but not for too long as 2011 appears to be another banner year for Helping Families In Need. With your donations our best purchase of the year was the fencing to close off the parking lot after hours. So much less garbage after installing the fencing in January 2010!! Check out our website www.helpingfamiliesinneed.org for upcoming fundraisers and be sure to check out our parking lot sale dates! Our annual November dinner and auction night brought in over \$22,000 and tickets sold out earlier than ever. Details will be on the website soon.

On a sad note our good friend and long time volunteer Marlow Gelean passed away very suddenly on December 3rd, 2010. Marlow had received a "you've got 3 to 6 months" diagnosis but passed away only a few weeks later. We were honoured to have Marlow to count among our biggest supporters. For those of you who made trips to our warehouse you will remember Marlow as the "guy sitting outside in the chair". We are pleased to have fulfilled Marlow's Christmas wish list. He will be greatly missed in the downtown eastside where he helped so many over the years. We know he is missed at the local IGA where he had his morning coffee and enjoyed the company of so many. Marlow had great stories to tell and so many great thoughts of how we could help even more families. Marlow was the one who kept everyone in line on Monday nights, shoveled the snow, raked the leaves, washed the parking lot, cleaned up the warehouse, did the metal and cardboard recycling, collected the pop cans and water bottles, picked up donations, dropped off donations to families and in general kept us all in good spirits. We have been kept very busy this December but as things start to slow down some we realize just how much we are missing Marlow.

A year end wouldn't be complete without extending our thanks to Jean, Sandra, Gwen, Asia, Doug, Ryan, Raylene, Steven, Richard, Stacey, Lynne, Wendi, Shelley, Dina, Shirley, Marilyn, Wayne, Billy, Rosanna, Cody, Chad, other Wendy and Mirella for their ongoing year round volunteer support. We couldn't do it without you!

2011 will be another big year for us. There is an ever increasing number of families needing our help and we are determined to help everyone who is referred to us.

Ray and I became great, great Aunt and Uncle to baby Emrance born in May to our great niece Krista. Our daughter Raylene married Stephen Dufour this past September in an absolutely beautiful ceremony at Stanley Park and reception at the new Trade and Convention Centre. Our son Ryan shocked everyone by making a speech. We had a wonderful time entertaining family and friends. Ray got everything finished up at the house just in time. Not bad for 3 years later!!! Nothing like a reason to finish everything that he started way back when. I often think that I should phone the charity line and leave my "honey do" list. Seems the other ladies get help faster!!!

Our best wishes to you all for a great 2011 and thank you again for choosing helping Families In Need Society as your charity of choice this holiday season.

Sincerely,

Ray and Roxy Abernethy
for the Helping Families In Need Society

