

What is the DHS Holiday Project?

Since the late 1960s, the DHS Holiday Project has provided a holiday gift to children and youth who receive services through the Allegheny County child welfare system. From its humble beginning, the DHS Holiday Project has matured into our most successful grassroots public-private partnership. Through the generosity of county residents—including employees of corporations, school groups, faith-based organizations and individuals—tens of thousands of holiday mornings have been brightened.

From the coordinator of a direct sponsorship drive at a local business:

“I wanted to follow up and thank you for assisting in this donation project. We have received so many emails and calls from all those involved saying that it really helped to put their lives in perspective. I know it did mine.”

DHS is

responsible for providing and administering publicly funded human services to Allegheny County residents.

DHS Principles

All services will be: **High quality**—reflecting best practices in case management, counseling, and treatment. **Readily accessible**—in natural, least-restrictive settings, often community-based. **Strengths-based**—focusing on the capabilities of individuals and families, not their deficits. **Culturally competent**—demonstrating respect for individuals, their goals, and preferences. **Individually tailored and empowering**—by building confidence and shared decision-making as routes to independence rather than dependency. **Holistic**—serving the comprehensive needs of families as well as individuals through tangible aid and a full continuum of services—Information Exchange, Prevention, Early Intervention, Case Management, Crisis Intervention and After Care.

Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive
Marc Cherna, DHS Director
Karen L. Blumen, DHS Deputy Director,
Office of Community Relations
Ondrea L. Burton, Manager, Event and Donations



How to sign up

To sign up to be an individual or group sponsor or for more information about the Holiday Project, please contact:

Event and Donations Team at
412-350-3428 or by email at
EventandDonationsTeam@AlleghenyCounty.us

Visit the Holiday Project webpage for gift ideas, gift-collection locations and event updates at:
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/holidayproject.aspx



Human Services Building
One Smithfield Street, First Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-350-3428
Fax: 412-350-5891

TTY: 412-473-2017
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs.aspx

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services provides services to eligible individuals without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, familial status, military service, or religious, community or social affiliations.

DHS funding acknowledgements found at: www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/funding.aspx
Produced by the DHS Office of Community Relations 11/2012

Brightening
the holidays of children
served by child welfare.

Who are the children that benefit from the DHS Holiday Project?

All of the children and youth who receive gifts through the DHS Holiday Project are from families that are receiving child welfare services through the DHS Office of Children, Youth and Families, the county agency charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect. Most are living with their families while receiving in-home or community-based services to help strengthen the positive aspects of the family. Some are living in an out-of-home placement such as a foster home or a group home. Recipients of gifts include newborns, toddlers, school-age children, teenagers and young adults. In every case, gifts from the Holiday Project provide an invaluable sense of normalcy for children and youth whose lives are shaped by daily challenges.

How are Holiday Project gifts provided?

Children may receive gifts through the Holiday Project in one of two ways:

A *sponsor* may be matched with a specific child and given his/her wish list to make shopping easier and more personal. Though it remains anonymous, many people prefer this option since they have the satisfaction of knowing they purchased a “wished-for” gift.

A *donor* may make a gift or monetary contribution to the Holiday Project. Gifts are organized for volunteers to “shop” for the ideal gift for each non-sponsored child. Monetary donations are used to increase the pool of culturally diverse gifts as well as those in much-needed age ranges such as infant and teen.

How to participate in the Holiday Project

Individuals or groups wishing to brighten a child or young person’s holiday can do so in a number of ways:

Group sponsorship

Sponsorship drives, led by a member of the group, are a great way to support the Holiday Project. Groups are provided with the age, gender and wish list for as many children as they agree to sponsor.

Group donors to the Holiday Project Workshop

Groups may choose to purchase and donate gifts to supply the Holiday Project Workshop.

Benefits of giving as a group:

An organization that provides gifts for 200 or more children and/or youth or donates \$5,000 or more may have its

- Name in the list of supporters on the Holiday Project webpage.
- Name mentioned in the widely available *DHS NEWS* e-newsletter.

Individual sponsors and donors

Individuals are invited to participate in the Holiday Project by either choosing to sponsor an individual child or by making a purchase to be added to the Holiday Project Workshop.

Pick-up and delivery of gifts and monetary donations

- Groups that donate gifts for 20 or more children and/or youth may arrange for a one-time gift pick-up at a local location of choice.
- Collection boxes are placed throughout downtown Pittsburgh and at various locations in the County.

- Individuals may also drop their unwrapped gifts off at the Human Service Building located at One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
- Checks should be made payable to: DHS Donations Fund with “Holiday Project” on the memo line and mailed to: DHS Holiday Project/OCR, Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

Suggested gifts

Holiday Project Amazon.com Wish List. Gifts from this list are shipped automatically to the Holiday Project Workshop. Simply search “DHS Holiday Project” on Amazon.com’s wish list site.

Gifts must be new and unwrapped. As a guideline, we try to provide each child with a gift(s) valued at a minimum of \$25.

The Holiday Project is always in need of toys, books and gifts that relate to children of all ages from diverse cultures.

- Bicycles and other riding toys (please include a helmet)
- Books with diverse cultural themes for children of all ages
- Creative kits (e.g., art, science) for school-age children
- Developmental toys for infants and toddlers
- Dolls and action figures with a full range of skin tones
- Hat, glove and scarf sets
- Imaginative play toys for school-age children
- Music-related electronics
- Purses, jewelry, make-up
- Remote control toys

Ideas for the hottest toys and gifts and children's books that celebrate diversity are listed on the DHS Holiday Project webpage. Donors are encouraged to review the list of suggested items before heading out to the stores to shop.