Lifting Up Westchester Seeking Holiday Donations
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By: Neal Rentz
In this season of giving the White Plains-based Lifting Up Westchester is offering many ways to provide a LIFT for those in need.

LUW, a nonprofit agency that provides homeless and poverty services to individuals throughout the county, has launched its third annual Holiday LIFT campaign.

The number one question LUW receives during the holiday season is “How do I help those in need?” Nancy Inzinna, LIFT volunteer and community outreach manager, said last week. “Holiday LIFT tries to match the community’s desire to help with the kinds of donations and volunteering we need most to ensure that our homeless and low-income neighbors can enjoy the holidays.”

LUW provides 2,000 holidays meals from its soup kitchen on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day, as well as filling and delivering 500 holiday food bags, distributing pies, cookies and goodie bags, wrapping and delivering hundreds of gifts to men, women and children in need and more.

“It is truly remarkable to see so many community members come together to help during the holiday season,” LUW Executive Director Anahaita Kotval said. “Each person adds their personal spin on the holidays and delights in the opportunity to share their own traditions with our neighbors in need.” All volunteer opportunities for serving holiday meals are filled, but there are other ways to get involved in the campaign, she said.

“There are a lot of things we try to provide,” LUW Director of Development Chris Schwartz said. Volunteers serve meals, through three shifts on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day, she noted. “It’s really a community affair,” she said.

LUW is asking residents to organize food drives. The most needed foods are turkeys, hams, instant mashed potatoes, gravy mixes, stuffing, canned vegetables, canned cranberries, cake and brownie mixes. LUW is suggesting that residents donate the free turkeys or coupons for free turkeys that grocery stores give away during the holiday seasons.
Another request is for donations of grocery store gift cards with values of $10 to $25 that LUW will provide to vegetarians and families who traditionally eat something other than turkey and ham.

Schwartz said LUW is asking residents to go to AmazonSmile and designate “Lifting Up Westchester” as your charity of choice Every time you shop, log on through AmazonSmile and you will be taken directly to the Amazon site and .5 percent of your eligible purchases will automatically be donated to LUW.

A new way to donate to the drive is by going to Amazon.com and going to the LUW Toy Wish List and donating a toy.

Baked pies and holiday cookies are also being requested. Also being sought are new gloves, hats and scarves for residents of the Open Arms Men’s Shelter and the Samaritan House Women’s Shelter. LUW is also asking for donations of multi-cultural dolls, sports balls and board games for the children in the Brighter Futures Youth Programs. Gift cards for teens and wrapping paper are also being requested.

For specific date and timing information on Holiday LIFT activities, visit: www.liftingupwestchester.org/holidays or contact the community outreach department via e-mail at ninzinna@liftingupwestchester.org or call 914-949-3098 Ext. 9735.
LUW also needs cash donations; donate at www.liftingupwestchester.org.

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