giving and volunteering

HOLIDAY GUIDE
Volunteer Opportunities

American Red Cross of West Michigan
“POP” INTO THE RED CROSS
Join current volunteers from Disaster Cycle Services, Biomedical Services, and Service to the Armed Forces/International Services to learn more about the work of the American Red Cross of West Michigan and how you can help!

📅 December 8 • 4:30–6 p.m.
✉️ abigail.wrightgeddes@redcross.org

Baxter Community Center
HOLIDAY BASKETS
Baxter Community Center is looking for volunteers to help distribute holiday baskets to our neighbors before Christmas to ensure all families can celebrate with their loved ones.

📅 December 19 and 20
9 a.m.–12 p.m., 12–3 p.m., and 3–5 p.m.
🌐 bit.ly/3tn9JV3

City of Kentwood Parks and Recreation
COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING CELEBRATION
Kentwood’s annual Community Tree Lighting Celebration is fun for the whole family! The event starts with a holiday light parade and continues with carriage rides, craft activities, our luminary walk, live music, and—of course—a visit from Santa!

We’re looking for a few volunteers to help out with the festivities. We need help setting up our luminary walk, running the light parade, and with various jobs throughout the event.

📅 December 1 • 4–8:30 p.m.
🌐 bit.ly/3WI4OM9

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volunteergr.org
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

SIGNING SANTA
Signing Santa is an annual event where Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing children get an opportunity to visit a Deaf Santa. The event includes crafts, activities, giveaways, and—of course—time to visit Santa and receive a gift! We need volunteers to set up, help at various stations, and clean up.

📅 December 10 • 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
🌐 deafhhs.org

Degage Ministries / Mel Trotter

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STORE
Every year, we hold an annual Christmas store where we collect new items, from toys to small appliances, and sell them back to the community in need for $5 or less. We do this so everyone can have the dignity and respect of buying gifts for their loved ones. We anticipate a huge turnout this year due to COVID impacting so many lives. We need many volunteers to make this event a success.

📅 December 14 • 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
🌐 bit.ly/3O7rfGN

Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding

HOLIDAY HORSE SHOW
Equest Center’s Holiday Horse Show provides our riders the opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities they’ve learned the past year for their friends, family, and the community. While the event takes place all day, we’ve broken down volunteer slots into smaller shifts.

We need volunteers for sidewalking with the riders for their safety; leading horses in class; retrieving and returning horses from their pastures; and grooming, tacking, and decorating horses.

If you’d like to volunteer outside of the riding aspect of this event, we’re always looking for individuals interested in baking holiday cookies and treats for our riders and their guests!

📅 December 10 • 10:30 a.m.–7 p.m.
🌐 equestcenter.org

Grace’s Table

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY
Grace’s Table hosts their annual Christmas party for teen mamas and their kiddos. We have various opportunities both before and during the event! We’re looking for volunteers to decorate the church space for the event, transport gifts to our Christmas celebration location, and/or stay and volunteer for the event. During the event, volunteer opportunities include serving a meal to our families, childcare (background check required), welcome station, gratitude station, set up, tear down, and other help as needed.

📅 December 9 • 9 a.m.–9 p.m.
🌐 gracestable.com/christmas

FIND YOUR PASSION. GET INVOLVED.
volunteergr.org
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre

**USHER MARY POPPINS**

We’re looking for 8–10 volunteers to usher an evening performance of Mary Poppins at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre by greeting more than 500 guests and helping them find their seats. House Managers will be on hand to brief volunteers on the ushering duties. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m., but we ask the ushers to arrive at 6:30 p.m. Volunteers can watch the performance for no charge and have minimal responsibilities after the performance concludes.

📅 November 18–December 18 • 6:30 p.m.

✉️ n.patin@grct.org

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Howard Christensen Nature Center

**PIE MAKING CLASS HELP**

We need volunteers to help with set up, during the class, and with clean up. No pie making skills necessary.

📅 November 17 • 6–9 p.m.

✉️ info@howardchristensen.org

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Kent District Library

**CHRISTMAS TREE SET UP**

Kent District Library needs volunteers to help decorate and display 10 artificial Christmas trees inside the Grandville Library. This will precede the Tree Lighting ceremony for the City of Grandville on Saturday, December 3. These beautiful trees will add to the festive atmosphere of the day, as well as the opportunity to vote for people’s choice as a KDL fundraising event!

📅 December 2

📰 kdl.volunteerhub.com/vv2

📞 616.784.2007

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Kent District Library

**WEST MICHIGAN SHORT STORIES**

As a volunteer, you’ll receive 5–7 short stories to review by email (a score sheet is available to help determine your scoring) through a link in Submittable the first week of December and have the pleasure of participating in a literary achievement for a chosen winner. Take your love of reading, writing, and libraries to a new level by helping us achieve our goal of 200 volunteers for this event!

📅 December 5–23

📰 writemichigan.org

📞 616.784.2007

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Meals on Wheels Western Michigan

**SENIOR MEAL DELIVERY**

Want to help ensure seniors get their meals during the holiday weekend? We’re looking for a group of up to 10 people who would be willing to deliver meals to seniors. You can group up and split between a few vehicles.

📅 November 22, December 22, and January 3

9 a.m.–12 p.m.

📰 mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org

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volunteergr.org
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan

HELP PACK EMERGENCY MEALS
We're looking for groups to come and pack emergency meals. We give these boxes filled with shelf stable food to our senior clients to ensure they have nutritious options if the weather makes the roads too bad to drive.

📅 All December, Monday–Friday • 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
🌐 mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org

Meaning In Colors

HOLIDAY POP-UP SHOP
We need volunteers to help set up, tear down, wrap gifts, and assist shoppers.

📆 December 18 • 11 a.m.–5 p.m.
✉️ iryonnahogan@gmail.com

The Salvation Army

RING RED KETTLE BELLS
We need individuals, small groups, families, and large groups to help ring the bell at the Red Kettle. Some locations are inside but most are outside, so dress appropriately. Your help is greatly appreciated. Volunteers allow us to keep more of the donations for programs and to help others!

📅 November–December
🌐 registertoring.com/default.aspx

The Salvation Army

ANGEL TREE TOY SORTING
Help welcome businesses that bring toy donations and then count and sort the toys. Lunch is provided 12–1 p.m. so volunteers can eat after or before their shifts.

📅 December 14–16
8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 12:30–5 p.m.
🌐 bit.ly/3WLEmRN

The Salvation Army

ANGEL TREE DISTRIBUTION
Help families shop for their children's gifts and assist them with their visit. Lunch is provided 12–1 p.m. so volunteers can eat after or before their shifts.

📅 December 20–21
8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 12:30–5 p.m.
🌐 bit.ly/3WLEmRN

FIND YOUR PASSION. GET INVOLVED.
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SECOM Resource Center
HOLIDAY FOOD BOXES
SECOM Resource Center will provide holiday food boxes to our neighbors. On December 15, we need a group to come in and pack the boxes. On December 22, we need a group to come and help us hand out the boxes to our neighbors. The time period may be shorter depending on how long it takes to package/hand out boxes.

📅 December 15 • 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
📅 December 22 • 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

✉️ volunteers@secomministries.org

United Church Outreach Ministry
DELIVER GIFTS TO SENIORS
UCOM partners with Home Instead to provide gifts for seniors. We need drivers to deliver up to 10 wrapped gifts to seniors in the Wyoming and SW Grand Rapids areas. This is a great project for families, church groups, or clubs like boy scouts, girl scouts, etc. We expect gifts to be ready for delivery the week of December 19.

📅 December 19–23

✉️ Shawn.Keener@ucomgr.org

Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts
HOLIDAY ARTIST MARKET
UICA’s Holiday Artist Market is back this December! We’re looking for folks to help with load in/out, vendor assistance, and welcoming visitors to this beloved seasonal event. Check out all volunteer opportunities and choose your preferred shift(s). We’ll confirm your schedule and specific role as soon as possible by email.

📅 December 2 • 5–7 p.m.
📅 December 3 • 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

🌐 kcad.formstack.com/forms/uica_volunteer

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GIFT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Arbor Circle
HOLIDAY GIVING SPONSOR
Community members like you help us bring holiday joy to those we serve.

We have three options for sponsorship:

• Match with an individual family and receive a profile and wish list as a guideline

• Select a program to adopt and receive a wish list (great option for larger groups)

• Select a wish list item and focus on buying or collecting multiples of a particular item (examples include hats and gloves, children’s books, and backpacks)

bit.ly/3A18DSP

AYA Youth Collective
BASIC NEEDS DONATIONS
At AYA’s drop-in center, youth (ages 14–24) experiencing homelessness and instability can access basic needs (i.e., showers, laundry, food, and hygiene items) and connect to various supports like vital document recovery, education and employment resources, transportation, housing assessment and referral, and culturally appropriate therapy, healthcare, and wellness activities. Often, the first step in reaching stability can be as simple as receiving a clean, new t-shirt. That’s why we keep a stock of basic needs items for youth—and we need your help this holiday season to ensure every youth gets what they need.

We’re currently in need of t-shirts, underwear, blankets, deodorant, hand warmers, small dish soaps, laundry soap, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and joggers.

Ongoing

mhaack@ayayouth.org

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Baxter Community Center

HOST HOLIDAY BASKET DRIVE
Baxter Community Center is seeking community organizations, places of worship, scout troops, businesses, and fraternities or sororities that are interested in hosting a Holiday Basket Drive for Thanksgiving.

November 1–18

Danielle@danselbaxter@comunitycenter.com
616.456.8593

Bethany Christian Services

SPONSOR A FAMILY
We do our best to match families in need with caring donors. Sponsors receive the family’s personal wish list and purchase gifts to help brighten their holiday. Sponsors who plan to deliver gifts directly to their matched families should do so anytime before Christmas. Otherwise, donors will drop off gifts to the designated Bethany office on December 2/3, 9/10, or 16/17.

October 28–December 17

Blandford Nature Center

HOLIDAY DONATIONS
Help Blandford Nature Center engage our community with enriching experiences in nature! Donating new or gently used items is an excellent way to assist our team in leading educational programs, maintaining land and trails, and caring for our wildlife ambassadors. Check out our wish lists to see what items you can donate, and check out our Memberships and Wildlife Care Experiences for gift ideas. Memberships and Wildlife Care Experiences are great ways to give to Blandford while getting out in nature and having fun!

Ongoing

Catholic Charities West Michigan

CLIENT CHRISTMAS DRIVE
Catholic Charities West Michigan (CCWM) is collecting new toys and new clothing donations for our annual Client Christmas Drive. Donations provide needed items for our Client Christmas Store that allows CCWM clients to shop for their children’s Christmas gifts.

October 11–December 12

Adopt a family deadline November 21

Community Rebuilders

HOLIDAY GIVING
We have opportunities through financial donations, adopting a family, our Amazon wish list, and more.

Find your passion. Get involved.
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City of Kentwood

LITTLE FREE PANTRY
Thank you for giving back to our community by supporting Kentwood’s Little Free Pantry! Donations from community members like you have helped countless families and individuals in need of food and other essentials.

Suggested food donations include canned meats (tuna and chicken preferred), canned vegetables, canned fruits, shelf-stable milk, nonstick spray, peanut butter, pasta sauce, cooking oil, jam/jelly, cereal, pasta, rice, and soup.

* Please check the expiration date on food items before donating them.

For personal care items, we suggest soap of all kinds, shampoo/conditioner, disposable razors, feminine hygiene products, laundry detergent, toilet paper, deodorant, and diapers.

Some other ideas include holiday meal staples, kid-friendly nonperishables, crayons, small toys, games, and school supplies.

D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s
ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE
Everyone deserves a childhood, but the children who come to D.A. Blodgett – St. John’s have faced things like trauma, abuse, neglect, and other challenges. Like any other children, what they need most is to feel safe and loved. That need is sometimes deepest during the holidays. You can help children experience the warmth and wonder of the season by providing the simple joy of a gift picked just for them. Through the DABSJ Holiday Gift Drive, we’ll distribute gifts to more than 500 kids in our counseling, foster care, adoption, mentoring, and residential programs. There are four ways to give back:

• Wish lists: Children make a list, and you get to shop it! Donors, families, or groups can sign up for as many wish lists as they’d like, and then they’ll receive a shopping list for each individual child.

• Monetary donation: Not able to shop but still want to give? Make a monetary donation of any amount to support the drive.

• Toys and gifts: Collect toys and gifts of your choice and drop them off for kids who don’t have wish lists.

• Volunteer: Help put together and wrap gifts.

November 1–December 9

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
SIGNING SANTA DONATIONS
We need donations for our Signing Santa event! Each child who visits Santa receives a gift. We need gifts for children ages 0–12 in the $10–15 range. You can drop off gifts on weekdays 9 a.m.–4 p.m. or ship them to our office by December 5.

November 1–December 5

Find your passion. Get involved.
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**Family Promise of Grand Rapids**

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STORE**
Help us stock our annual Christmas Store with gifts, toys, household items, stocking stuffers, and wrapping supplies for families moving home from emergency shelter.

We’d love to have your help in ensuring families experiencing homelessness have a holiday season that’s merry and bright! Each year, Family Promise of Grand Rapids partners with Cornerstone Church to create a one-day Christmas Store serving more than 50 local families moving home from emergency shelter for their first Christmas in a new space. Help us collect items like household goods, parent and teen gifts, stocking stuffers, and wrapping paper to ensure these families have a magical Christmas morning.

**Donation drop off December 8 • 5–8 p.m.**

lilyf@familypromisegr.org

616.608.8917

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**Heart of West Michigan United Way**

**STUFF THE SLED**
Our annual Stuff the Sled drive is an opportunity to bring holiday cheer to young children in need. When you purchase items from our wish list, you help us provide holiday gift bags to local students enrolled in programs at Head Start for Kent County. It’s the perfect way to bring smiles during the season of giving. Best of all, anyone can participate!

November 1–December 7

hwmuw.org/stuff-the-sled

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**Meaning In Colors**

**POP-UP SHOP DONATIONS**
We’re creating a Pop-Up Shop for families in need. Families will be able to shop for free. We’re in need of any type of gifts. Examples include toys, clothes, games, blankets, shoes, essential items, and wrapping paper.

October 28–December 18

iryonnahogan@gmail.com

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**Grace’s Table**

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**
We’re looking for individuals to help sponsor our annual Christmas celebration for teen mamas and their kiddos. We’re looking for event sponsors to cover the costs of the meal, sweatshirts, photography, additional family gifts, etc.

October 28–December 9

gracetable.com/christmas

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**Our Hope Association**

**ESSENTIAL CLOTHING DRIVE**
Our Hope Association offers recovery to women seeking healing from the disease of addiction. Many of our clients come into our program with nothing. This holiday season, we’re asking for the essentials to make each client feel at home upon walking through the doors of Our Hope.

Essential clothing: Socks, underwear, winter hats, winter gloves, and winter coats (especially 2XL, 3XL, and 4XL)

Essential personal care: Deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, wash cloths, and bath towels

All Holiday Season

OurHopeAssociation.org/wishlist

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The Other Way Ministries

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STORE**

We have an annual Christmas Store where qualifying neighbors can register to participate. Qualifying registrants will receive a $100 credit for each child in their home to spend in the store. They will sign up for two volunteer slots where they will manage the store and wrap gifts for other participants during their shopping time, and then get to shop themselves at another time. Last year, we served 138 families (368 children).

We're asking for monetary donations and new toys and gifts so we can fully stock the store with relevant and high quality presents. We'll use 100% of monetary donations for purchasing more toys (no admin fee).

**December 9**

theotherway.org/christmas-store/

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Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association

**SUPPORT FAMILIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

The Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (RPNA) is looking to support families in need this holiday season. We’re collecting new children’s toys and books to match with parents in need of gifts for their kids. Roosevelt Park has a large Spanish-speaking community, so we’re also interested in bilingual items or children’s books in Spanish. Last year, we provided gifts for more than 260 children ages 0–15.

**November 7–December 9**

theotherway.org/christmas-store/

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Ronald McDonald House Charities West Michigan

**HOLIDAY COLLECTION DRIVE**

We’re in great need of new or homemade blankets for adults, shelf-stable snack food and meal ingredients, and baby items. Help spread some holiday cheer to families who will be away from home while their child receives medical care.

**Ongoing**

bit.ly/3A2YiG2

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Samaritas

**CHRISTMAS WISH PROGRAM**

Samaritas’ Christmas Wish program serves children in our care throughout Michigan who miss out on other statewide gift-giving programs due to age, type of need, or date of entry into services. At Samaritas, we believe that everyone in our care deserves a great Christmas with the people they love.

We partner with individuals, groups, and churches who sign up to receive a wish list from one or more of these youth around the state. The wish list will include some information about the youth, their likes, and a list of items they would wish for.

This wish list serves as a guideline as you shop for gifts (we suggest $100–150 per child). You can deliver gifts to the local Samaritas office Dec. 1–3, depending on location.

**Contact for delivery date**

bit.ly/3UpYsiH

samaritas.co/GiveAWish

kpark@samaritas.org

517.449.3270

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volunteergr.org
United Church Outreach Ministry

**FOOD DONATIONS FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

UCOM strives to provide our neighbors with culturally relevant foods for the holidays. We’re especially looking for donations of Maseca (corn flour), banana leaves, corn husks, canned jalapeños, salsas, tortillas, Hispanic spices, cinnamon sticks, hominy, canned greens, canned yams, black eyed peas, rice or other Asian noodles, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, fish sauce, teriyaki sauce, siracha, rice vinegar, bean sprouts, and baby corn. Thank you for considering a donation to provide the ingredients for a familiar holiday meal for our SW neighbors.

📅 November–December

✉️ Shawn.Keener@ucomgr.org

YWCA West Central Michigan – Sojourner House

**ADOPT A FAMILY**

The holiday season can be very stressful for our clients, and we try to make the season brighter by finding donors who can purchase some Christmas gifts for them. We provide three ideas of items they need or wish for. As donors, you can choose to purchase off the list or not. After you purchase the gifts, we ask that you wrap them, as well. Because of domestic violence and confidentiality issues, donors cannot deliver gifts directly to clients.

📅 October 28–December 13

✉️ jtimmer@ywcawcmi.org

The Salvation Army

**ANGEL TREE SIGNUPS**

Businesses, small groups, churches, etc. sign up to be an Angel Tree location. In turn, they display a tree (in any form) and place The Salvation Army Angel Tree tag (which we provide) on the tree for clients, employees, and other visitors to take from the tree and then go shopping. They return the unwrapped gifts to the site, and then the site will bring those collected toys to the Angel Tree Distribution Center.

Thank you for helping make Christmas better for many children and families!

📅 November–December

✉️ joy.hoskins@usc.salvationarmy.org

YWCA West Central Michigan – Sojourner House

**GIFTS FOR SOJOURNER HOUSE ADULTS**

The holiday season can be very stressful for our clients, and we try to make the season brighter by finding donors who can purchase some Christmas gifts for them. We provide three ideas of items they need or wish for. As donors, you can choose to purchase off the list or not. After you purchase the gifts, we ask that you wrap them, as well. Because of domestic violence and confidentiality issues, donors cannot deliver gifts directly to clients.

📅 October 28–December 20

✉️ jtimmer@ywcawcmi.org

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[volunteergr.org](http://volunteergr.org)