

JFS Adopt a Family Sees Record Numbers

924 individuals served by the nonprofit organization received holiday gifts.

ASHLEY ZLATOPOLSKY CONTRIBUTING WRITER

This holiday season, a record-setting 924 people served by Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit received gifts through the long-running Adopt a Family program.

Adopt a Family spreads Chanukah joy and Christmas cheer to Jewish and non-Jewish community members who utilize support from the nonprofit social services organization.

This year, 216 donors and groups committed to purchasing gifts and fulfilling wish lists, while another 93 people donated money to help supplement gifts for additional families or individuals in need.

Adopt a Family is open to anyone currently served by JFS. Staff work with these individuals to come up with a wish list of holiday items that range from needs to wants. Wish lists are then given to donors registered with the program who shop for and gift wrap these items.

Donors don't know who they're shopping for. The recipient could be a single mother with three kids, an elderly community member or a family that recently started a new life in Metro Detroit.

"It's a very high-touch program," says JFS chief development officer Amy Newman. "We pride ourselves on the fact that when a donor says they want to shop for a family, we then contact the donor and say, 'Who are you looking to adopt and how much are you willing to spend?'"

Based on these conversations with donors, JFS goes through wish lists to connect them with the

appropriate families or individuals that match their interests.

"It's very carefully curated," Newman says. "You don't go on a website and have something to pick from. It's very personal."

Monetary donations also help support last-minute requests or if something comes up and donors aren't able to purchase gifts. This helps ensure no one is left behind without a gift.

For the first time, JFS also created an Amazon wish list for families that weren't adopted so anyone could step in to purchase the individual items, which were then mailed directly to JFS.

Requests run the gamut. Some people ask for clothing, while those with kids may wish for Barbies or toy trucks. JFS also partnered with Toyology Toys for a 20% discount on any purchases for the Adopt a Family program.

Many recipients asked for essential items such as toilet paper, paper towels, infant diapers and cleaning supplies in addition to gifts..

"We are so grateful to our generous donors who make this program possible," Newman says. "The attention to detail they put into fulfilling the wish lists means so much to the recipients."

Of course, gifts are also wrapped so everyone can experience the joy of unwrapping a present. Once collection is complete, recipients are able to head to JFS to pick up their gifts via curbside.

This year's record-setting numbers mark a more

Rachel Peres, Kara Lee, and Emily Croitori amidst the gifts.

Rachel Peres and Lindsay Leder spread holiday joy.



The Adopt a Family program offers donors a unique opportunity to connect with those served by Jewish Family Service in a way that personalizes their giving. The generosity of donors is evident in the thoughtfully wrapped and abundant gifts they provide to those served by JFS. However, the needs are not just in December; they are ongoing. If you want to help fulfill needs of those in our community year-round, visit jfsdetroit.org to see how you can get involved or make a difference.

than 100 person increase from 2023's Adopt a Family program, which saw some 800 people sign up for holiday gifts.

"This is a huge jump to be at 924," Newman says of supporting a community with increasing needs. "It's really special to walk into the building and see this huge room filled with gifts." 🎁