



SEASON OF GIVING

The holiday season is upon us. For most, the holidays are a time of joy, happiness, and tradition. A time when we surround ourselves with family and friends. Exchanging gifts. Filling our plates. Keeping warm by a fire. But for some, the holiday season means something very different. It may mean having to visit the local food pantry to piece together a holiday meal. It may mean choosing between paying for your medications or buying that gift your grandchild has been begging for all year long. It may mean it's going to get cold...and the oil tank is empty. In an effort to care for our most vulnerable residents, the Town of Somers Human Services Department is announcing the first Season of Giving campaign. The goal of this campaign will be to raise awareness of programs in Somers that benefit our residents in

need in an effort to increase community involvement and contributions. Oftentimes, people want to help but they simply don't know how. The Season of Giving campaign will focus on 5 ways in which you can care for your neighbors in need not only during the holiday season, but *throughout the entire year*. ***We hope that you will consider making a contribution this holiday season and that this information helps you to know where your contributions will go and who they will help. If you cannot contribute financially, please consider donating your time. Please open your hearts during the Season of Giving.***

♥ TOWN OF SOMERS EMERGENCY FUND

Did you know that you can make a donation to a fund that is utilized only by the Town of Somers Human Services Department to assist low income families in Somers with basic needs and emergency situations? Residents who are struggling financially are able to utilize the fund for oil, propane, wood, electricity, rent, or any number of other extenuating circumstances. This year, the fund was utilized to pay for a piece of medical equipment a child needed that insurance would not cover. This fund is utilized throughout the entire year and is ***dangerously low*** as we head into the winter heating season. Without your donations, this fund does not exist. This fund is utilized throughout the entire year. There are policies in place and an application process to avoid any misuse of the fund. Checks can be made payable to Town of Somers Emergency Fund and sent to: Town of Somers Human Services Department, 19 Battle Street P.O. Box 308 Somers, CT 06071.

♥ FOOD PANTRIES

Did you know that there are two food pantries in Somers? Champ's Place is located at the Somers Congregational Church at 599 Main St. Donations of food are accepted in the church office Monday through Thursday from 9:30am-3pm. However, monetary donations are preferred, as storage space is an issue and items can be purchased at Foodshare at a reduced cost. Checks can be made payable to Somers Congregational Church with "Champ's Place" in the memo section. All Saint's Food Pantry is located at All Saint's Church at 25 School St. Donations of non-perishable items can be dropped off anytime in the basement entryway. Items such as pasta sauce, canned fruit, cereal, hearty soups, and coffee are in high demand. Monetary donations can be made payable to All Saint's Church with "food pantry" in the memo section. Please check all food donations for expiration dates and also remember that hygiene items such as toilet paper, paper towels, soap, laundry detergent, etc. are accepted and encouraged as well, as these items are not covered by SNAP (food stamps).

♥ STUFF-A-CRUISER

Keep an eye out for the "Stuff-a-Cruiser" event at the Somers Police Department at 451 Main Street. You can drop off new, unwrapped toys at this location. All items collected supplement the Holiday Adopt-a-Child Program and are distributed to families in need in Somers. This annual event is coordinated by the Somers Women's Club.

♥ SALVATION ARMY KETTLE CAMPAIGN

Have you ever wondered where your money goes when you drop it into the red kettle of the bell ringers at holiday time? The Town of Somers Human Services Department is part of a service unit for the Salvation Army. We receive funds from the Salvation Army annually to help meet the needs of our low-income residents and part of our role as a service unit is to assist in coordination of the Kettle Campaigns. *90% of funds raised through the Kettle Campaigns stay in our service unit.* We are able to purchase items at a much lower cost when we utilize our Salvation Army funds. To ensure that funds remain in your community, be sure to drop your donation into the red kettle when you see it in Somers! The kettle campaign cannot be successful without volunteers. If you are willing to donate an hour or two of your time this holiday season to ring the bell, please contact Deanna Schuetz at 860-265-7550 or Dschuetz@somersct.gov.

♥ HOLIDAY ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM

This program assists low-income families with providing gifts for their children for the holidays. The program is entirely anonymous. Donors "adopt" a child (or more than one child) and receive a list of items the child needs as well as a few "wishes" and some general information about the child's interests/hobbies/etc. so the donor truly has the opportunity to get to know their child. Gifts are dropped off at the Human Services office by a specified date and staff provides the gifts to the family. Recipients write an anonymous thank you note to their donors so that donors can experience a connection with the family. This program is truly a fun and rewarding experience for those who get involved. Most donors return year after year, as it becomes part of their holiday tradition. There are no set expectations such as dollar amounts for our donors. Some donors choose to adopt one child, some adopt several. It is entirely up to the donor what they are able to contribute. Any help to these families is appreciated. This program cannot exist without our donors. If you are interested in adopting a child this holiday season, please contact Deanna Schuetz at 860-265-7550 or Dschuetz@somersct.gov.