

GUIDELINES FOR GIVERS

2024 Holiday Sharing Program

Thank you for giving your gifts, concern, and time to the Alexandria family, foster child or senior or disabled citizen you are sponsoring for this Holiday Season. The family, foster child, or senior/adult with a disability you are sponsoring is receiving services from the Department of Community and Human Services. They are eligible because they are experiencing serious economic, medical, or psychological distress. Sometimes the only support system they have is a network of government agencies. Sometimes they have never sought assistance from others. As a member of the Alexandria community, YOU are reaching out to extend a hand to them, as they face a variety of crises and traumas. YOU are bringing joy to someone's life this holiday season!

There are a variety of ways to help this year.

- Sponsor a FAMILY by fulfilling their specific wish list and providing a grocery gift card for a holiday meal. Items may include toys/gifts, books, bikes, clothing. We have small families with one or two children/teens and larger families with three or four children/teens. **You can drop off the gifts at our office (4850 Mark Center Drive) during our distribution period (December 8, 9, 10, 11) or deliver directly to the family.**
- Sponsor a SENIOR/DISABLED ADULT by providing a grocery gift card to enjoy a holiday meal and \$75 Target, Walmart, or Amazon Gift Card. **Drop off at DCHS (4850 Mark Center Drive) by December 5.**
- Sponsor a CHILD IN FOSTER CARE (under age 13) by fulfilling their specific wish list. Items may include toys/gifts, books, bike, clothing. **Drop off at DCHS (4850 Mark Center Drive) by December 5.**
- Sponsor a TEEN IN FOSTER CARE by providing gift cards to teen friendly stores. **Drop off at DCHS (4850 Mark Center Drive) by December 5.**

If you choose to give joy by fulfilling a specific wish list, the wish list provided is to be considered a guide. Community volunteers like you have helped families record their wish lists. The wish lists are limited to CHILDREN ONLY (to include necessary clothing, one toy (or a very few) or recreational item, depending on age, and a book), and a grocery gift card. **The items listed are truly needed.** You may purchase as many or as few of the items as you decide. **Purchasing decisions are completely up to you.** Please remember, however, that children and teens watch the same shows and shop in the same stores as their peers and often wish for items and brands they see in the popular culture. However, we continue to put the emphasis on **"Building Bodies and Brains,"** as in past years. **We suggest you spend approximately \$125 per person or family member,** depending on age, request, etc. Please balance the number of gifts across all children in the family, as you would for your own family.

- **If you give a bike, please also provide a bike helmet.** If you give a bike to one of the kids in the family, please also give a bike to other children in the family who have asked for a bike.
- **Please include gift receipts, especially for clothing, if possible.**

Grocery store gift card. EVERY family and senior/disabled citizen **NEEDS** a grocery gift card in these difficult times. Please purchase a card for the store (**Giant, Safeway, Harris Teeter, Lidl, Wegmans, or ALDI**) that is listed on the Wish List, if you are able. Denominations of \$25 and \$50 work best.

Families genuinely appreciate your generosity. They may not be accustomed to, or know how to, express their thanks in a way that you may expect. For example, you may or may not receive a thank you note, forwarded through the staff. **However, knowing that you have brought joy to one of your neighbors is its own intrinsic reward.**

If you deliver the gifts directly to the home of the family, they have given permission for you to receive their name, phone number and address. This face-to-face meeting can be very positive for both giver and receiver, or it can be fraught with discomfort. Please be as understanding as possible of the awkward circumstances. Always, keeping confidentiality is the greatest concern. Please respect the privacy of the family to whom you deliver gifts.

Please call Christine Levine, Coordinator of Community Resources, at 703.746.5663 with any questions or concerns or email holidaysharing@alexandriava.gov. Again, thank you for your caring support.