

SOS Insights

from my desk to your heart

As we began preparing for our annual [Caring for Community at Christmas](#) program and fundraising campaign, we knew we would have to do many things differently because of the pandemic. The way we collect toys, the client registration process, and the way we distribute toys and grocery gift cards to low-income residents would need to be handled in a new way.

But the one thing we knew wouldn't be different was the way our community demonstrates its support for residents in need. **And we haven't been disappointed!**

Thanks to the local businesses, individuals and families that have all stepped forward with donations of cash and gifts, **we have been able to successfully fill our Toy Shop and we reached our financial goal of \$125,000.** That means every parent and grandparent who enters our Toy Shop will be able to select a special gift for their child. Families, adults and seniors will be able to choose food that is meaningful to them from a local grocery store, and enjoy that food over the holidays.

It's been heart-warming to see smiles on the faces of local children who have dropped off gifts at SOS for our Toy Shop. Some of them have told us how they raised their own money to make sure other children have a gift to open on Christmas. **Such a wonderful way to pass along this important holiday tradition to the next generation.**



Five-year-old Oliver raised his own money by making gingerbread men ornaments and collecting bottles. He purchased these gifts to give to local children and youth.

For many families in our area who were already struggling to make ends meet before the pandemic, the lock-down in March created even more financial instability. And now that we are in the midst of a second wave with new restrictions that threaten the livelihoods of people who are just hanging on by a thread, more and more residents will be pushed further into poverty. As a community, we need to be there to **give them a hand up** as they navigate the difficult months ahead.

"Often struggling with finances has an element of shame and feelings of isolation. This program literally felt like my community was lifting me up and allowing me to feel like people care and that I'm not alone in my struggles. I felt deeply grateful and cared for. I felt like my village was supporting me and my children through a difficult time." ~A Christmas program client

Stories like these are why our **Caring for Community at Christmas** program is so important this year. Not only is it providing a tangible expression of support through toys and grocery gift cards for low-income residents, but it's demonstrating the power of community generosity that provides much needed hope for those who are struggling.

"It was worst time of my life, and the community came together, and that program, it saved me. It put faith in my heart that there are people out there that really care. That time of year, there's really never enough food, and the gift card was awesome because we could get those little things, hors d'oeuvres, candy canes and extra meat, that kind of thing. It was just so awesome." ~A Christmas program client

Yes, Christmas will be different for all of us this year. But one thing remains the same. **We live in a caring community.** We see businesses helping other businesses. Individuals helping their neighbours. And families helping families.



[Click here for a short video of families helping families](#)

SOS will continue helping families and individuals beyond the holiday season. We know from experience that many residents struggle financially and emotionally in the winter months following Christmas, and thanks to your support, we are here to help.

If you would like to help SOS continue to meet needs and improve lives after the holidays and throughout the winter, [click here to make a donation online.](#)

Thank you and Merry Christmas from all of us at SOS!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susanna".

Susanna Newton
Executive Director
Society of Organized Services



[Support residents through the dark winter months by making an online donation here.](#)