

2020

FFC

Christmas
Catalog



First Federated
Church of Peoria

3601 N Sheridan Road
Peoria IL 61604

A Message from the
FFC Mission Committee

Findings of Comfort and Joy

In your hands you hold a very special catalog that can help you experience the true meaning of Christmas. By assisting others in the Peoria community who are in need of a helping hand, you can rekindle your light and theirs.

The Mission Committee of First Federated Church has selected nine organizations to receive contributions through our *Christmas Special Offering*.

These nine organizations were selected for inclusion after careful consideration. Some are new to our *Christmas Giving Catalog*. All have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. For this publication, we asked them to describe the recent challenges they have faced and how they are adjusting to new challenges caused by the pandemic.

This is how the *Christmas Special Offering* works.

Read through the catalog descriptions, decide which organization(s) you would like to support, place your contribution in the envelope provided, and on the insert of the envelope check the recipient(s) you have chosen. You may choose one to all nine.

Please make your single check payable to
First Federated Church.

Your contribution will be distributed according to your wishes.

Why This Year's Catalog Is A Little Different . . .

The year 2020 is all about COVID-19 and this year's *Christmas Giving Catalog* reflects that. Your Mission Committee is proud to highlight nine agencies that are meeting head-on the challenges of the pandemic. All could benefit from our prayers and financial support.

In preparing this catalog we found inspiring projects, like Pop-Up fruit stands that move from neighborhood-to-neighborhood to distribute fresh produce, to trucks adapted to bring portable showers, bathroom, and laundry facilities to the homeless to offer them the dignity of good hygiene.

We found that food insecurity has crept into households it has never been before. Nearly every social service agency in Peoria has a food component.

- * *Midwest Food Bank increased its food purchases by 724% when the nation's emergency food supply chain was disrupted*
- * *Neighborhood House pantry grew by 850%*
- * *requests for baby formula skyrocketed at Crittenton Centers, and the need for diapers, oh my! They had more requests (6,900) in three months than the average for an entire year.*

We found that agencies are addressing crushing costs of cleaning supplies and personal protection equipment, items not anticipated in their 2020 budgets; "safety protocols" that make delivery of their services more difficult; and cancellation of major fundraising events. Even loyal supporters like FFC have had fundraising restrictions and less to give.

We were surprised to find that even *Paws Giving Independence*, which trains service dogs for the disabled, is affected by the pandemic.

Despite this, we found agency directors "living their faith" and energized by both the added challenges and the resilience of their clients who are somehow making it through.

If you feel the spirit of Christmas giving and welcome the opportunity to "live your faith," we hope this catalog is helpful to you.

May your generosity bring you joy.

Center for Prevention of Abuse

Helping all people live free from violence and abuse

Abuse doesn't stop when the rest of the world does.

Around the globe, rates of interpersonal violence and abuse have skyrocketed during the COVID-19 health crisis and Central Illinois is no exception. At the *Center for Prevention of Abuse (CFPA)*, we continue to help individuals and families in our community experiencing a pandemic within a pandemic.

As an essential service, we continue to provide free and confidential services to all survivors of interpersonal violence 24/7.

The impact on our clients, programs, and services due to COVID-19 continues to be significant. Many clients have found themselves isolating with their abuser, unable to escape or get to a safe location. Stress levels over COVID-19 have been added to pre-existing emotional and safety issues. We offer emergency safe shelter for victims fleeing domestic violence; we respond to medical advocacies for sexual assault victims in local hospitals; we offer therapy via telehealth or in-person; we have adjusted prevention education programming for remote learning; the Adult Protective Services program, at the direction of the Illinois Department on Aging, continues to do client interactions via phone with some site visits; in-person court advocacy services are limited following courthouse guidelines; site visits to long-term care facilities have only recently been reinstated. All non-essential staff work remotely and some direct service staff use telehealth options.

We plan to purchase more personal protection equipment for staff and clients, thermometers, sanitizing supplies, and plexiglass barriers. We are working diligently to outfit and fully stock our food pantries, home goods, and cleaning supplies to combat food insecurity and assist survivors with meeting basic needs.

**Thank you for helping *CFPA* build
a safe and peaceful community.**

Crittenton Centers

At *Crittenton Centers* we believe strong families build strong communities, so we are here as we have been since 1892 to support families through this pandemic. We continue to offer services through our **Crisis Nursery**, **Child Development Center (CDC)**, and **Family Services**, abet with new safety measures and protocols.

When the pandemic began, we maintained our 24/7 **Crisis Nursery** hotline for parents and immediately recognized an increased need for diapers, wipes, and formula. We developed a safe curbside delivery process. During the three months of the stay-at-home order, we gave out 69,000 diapers. That's 9,000 more than the 60,000 average for an entire year. And the need continues.

We sprang into action in our **Child Development Center** when Peoria Public Schools announced no in-person classes. While generally serving children birth to age six, we turned one classroom into a licensed classroom for children age 5-12, with technology and staff to support remote learning, so our families with older children could continue working without sacrificing their children's education or safety.

We have made many other adjustments to best serve clients within new guidelines. Our **Family Services** home visits and parent classes are now held virtually. We are working through the fact that our CDC has smaller classroom capacities - 50 square feet required per child - and the costly requirement that the same staff stay with a child throughout the day. This will require us to adjust the hours we are open or pay overtime: this on top of the pending increase in minimum wage that will significantly impact our budget.

We are energized by the incredible generosity of donors who recognize our challenges and by the knowledge that we are keeping children safe in times so stressful to families.

Dream Center Peoria

The mission of *Dream Center Peoria* has intensified but has not changed with COVID-19. We have more clarity than ever for our mission and methods. Our mission is to impact families living in poverty, starting with kids and youth. We do this by going over-the-top with Christ-like love, dignity, compassion, and purpose.

First Federated Church and 30+ other churches are helping us with our four pillars of ministry: *DCP* Students, *DCP* Shelter, *DCP* Cares, and *DCP* Mobile.

Students - Daily Mentoring & Schooling

With your help, we've transitioned from an after-school program to an all-day program for 50-70 students, at no cost to the families. \$30 a month provides all-day tutoring, mentoring, athletics, hands-on job training, and the arts to a student. What an amazing opportunity to spend all day with them!

Shelter - Safe Place for Women, Kids, and Parents

We turn no one away from our homeless shelter because we believe anyone—woman, child, or fathering Dad—deserves a safe place. Demand is increasing. The average age in our homeless shelter is nine years old. *(Thank you, First Federated, for taking on a whole month of shelter meals!)*

Cares - Free Clothing Store (Done with Dignity)

Many families are visiting us for the first time and in need of clothing, toiletries, linens, and undergarments. We are clothing 900 people a month and welcome and rely on donations.

Mobile - Taking Love to the Streets

In October we launched a new ministry with a mobile barbershop, mobile laundry, food truck, and mobile showers. Join us in prayer for the right partners and that the ministry reaches the right people at the right time.

ELITE

COVID-19 has thrown *ELITE* the same curve ball it has thrown to every other social service agency. But, as Carl Cannon's very lean machine, administered through the Peoria Park District, we can adapt to changes . . . in very short order . . . as circumstances dictate.

K-8 *ELITE*

Our *ELITE* teams who go into schools have been there all along encouraging respect among the kids who are coming for in-person learning and monitoring/correcting kids on the virtual classroom monitors so the teachers can be more effective. Getting young kids started in the right direction early is key.

High School *ELITE*

We are hoping to be able to offer this flagship program again in 2021, but only time will tell whether that will be possible. If we can do it and do it safely, we will be in those high schools come February. This is a vital program that gives teens the chance to learn how to be a good employee and the opportunity to earn money to spend and save for college.

***ELITE* RE-Entry**

Through a smaller class size and social distancing, we were able to graduate a RE-Entry class in November. A select cadre of these men and women will make home visits on some of our more troubled youth. These "Game Changers" have the training, the street smarts, and the newfound compassion to detect and defuse potentially dangerous family situations.

COVID-19 has changed how *ELITE* serves its communities and how we try to raise funds. We have no Christmas Choir this year and no speaking engagements. But we do have long-time friends like First Federated who believe in what we do and continue to support our programs and mission. And, for that, we are eternally grateful.

Midwest Food Bank

The mission of the *Midwest Food Bank* is to share the love of Christ by alleviating hunger and malnutrition locally and throughout the world and providing disaster relief, all without discrimination. Put simply, *Midwest Food Bank* gathers food donations and distributes them to partner non-profit feeding agencies. COVID-19 has had three major impacts.

1. As of this writing, the Tri-County area has seen a 48% increase in the number of local families experiencing food insecurity, a percentage higher than the national average. Before COVID-19, 36,500 local people didn't know where their next meal would come from. That number has increased to 54,100.
2. The U.S. emergency food supply chain has been disrupted with food manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, and grocery stores experiencing shutdowns. With a 50% decrease in food inventory in May, *MFB* purchases of food increased 724% to keep food flowing to the 330 feeding programs and food pantries served across Central Illinois, Eastern Iowa, and Harlan, Kentucky.
3. *MFB Peoria* has seen a 24% drop in the number of volunteers over the past four months due to social distancing and safety/sanitizing protocols.

Despite these obstacles, *Midwest Food Bank Peoria* **has distributed 30% more food to partnering food pantries and feeding programs in 2020.** Additionally, *MFB* volunteers assembled more than 75,000 family food boxes (70 semi-trailer loads) that were trucked to cities across the country through *MFB's* partnership with The Salvation Army.

MFB has 11 locations in the U.S., Africa, and Haiti. More information about all that *MFB* does and how to support them with dollars or volunteer hours, go to www.midwestfoodbank.org.

Neighborhood House

Neighborhood House continues the progressive thinking of our founders by providing ever-changing services as the needs of the community dictate. That experience in adaptability has served our community well, especially now as we face unprecedented new challenges with COVID-19.

Since March, we have adapted each of our programs to meet the needs of the community, with food insecurity a central focus for *Neighborhood House*. **We operate a food pantry for families as well as provide meal services to local senior citizens and children.**

When the shelter-in-place order went into effect, we quickly shifted our youth education services to a meal delivery service for 232 children. As other local food pantries were forced to close, ours remained open and even expanded. Our pantry has since grown 850% with 15 new recipients each week. Our Meals on Wheels program has added 538 seniors, adding 22 seniors each week. We are proud to help our senior clients care for their pets and their own mental health through our Critters Meals on Wheels program.

With the acquirement of Common Place, *Neighborhood House* now offers GED adult education classes in addition to our Financial Employment and Empowerment program, enabling us to empower our community to reach fullest potential.

The needs in our community are growing at unprecedented rates. With your support we will continue to strive to meet these needs.

Meals on Wheels

Senior Citizen's Meals for a Month: \$110
Senior Citizen's Meals for 6 Months: \$650

Critters Meals on Wheels

Senior Citizen's Pet for a Month: \$42
Senior Citizen's Pet for 6 Months: \$250

Kids Meals

200 Children's Meals for 1 Day: \$550

Adult Ed/Financial Empowerment

One Adult Learner's GED Classes: \$120
Monthly Lunch & Learn Sessions: \$100

Food Pantry

One Food Pantry Box: \$100

Paws Giving Independence

First Federated Church was the first organization to donate to us and believe in the mission of *Paws Giving Independence*. Since 2008 we have trained and placed over 150 service dogs with individuals and facility dogs in area schools. ***PGI is still an all-volunteer organization and we place the dogs free of charge.*** Most recipients of our dogs are confined to a wheelchair, have balance issues, or need medical alert.

In March, like every other organization, our world changed. We ended all public training of dogs and fundraising efforts. Logan Correctional Facility, which pairs inmates with our puppies before the dogs are old enough to begin more intense training, paused the Helping Paws program. In August we were notified that, because the State was redirecting funding to COVID-19 relief, our partnership with Logan could continue only if we took on financial responsibility for vet care, training supplies, and dog food expenses of the puppies. Knowing the importance of this program to the inmates and the needs of our clients, we agreed to this. We had dogs in training and people who needed them. Your donations from previous years helped to pay these expenses.

Our biggest expenses continue to be the medical costs of the dogs in training and training supplies, such as harnesses. The number of dogs we train at a time is based on our income. ***Even though times have been difficult we have placed ten dogs since March and have 25 dogs currently in training.*** Things would be different without your donations. We are grateful to the congregation for their support over the years, but it is especially appreciated and needed this year.

Once again you are there to help us in uncertain times.

Peoria Grown

The mission of *Peoria Grown* is to address food insecurity issues impacting the city through improved coordination of resources; access to affordable, healthy food; and education on nutrition and making healthy food choices. Among other activities, we provide fresh fruit and vegetables to local families and food bank clients and help them learn how to plan healthy meals using them. During COVID-19 we have learned to scale and expand our services, alleviating stress on schools, non-profits, and food pantries in getting healthy food to those most in need.

For the past 19 months, *Peoria Grown* has completed the following programs:

- * 75 community cooking classes with 321 participants. Our partner dietitians created recipes utilizing fresh ingredients in combination with commodities commonly distributed by area food banks.
- * COVID-19 relief fruit and produce bags (March – July 2020). We packed and distributed 8,436 fruit bags and 709 produce bags.
- * Advocated for and launched acceptance of EBT/Links card for online grocery delivery.
- * Distributed 1,220 pounds of fruit and 300 pounds of produce through our Pop-Up Produce and Fruit Stands (August – September).
- * In mid-November, we will be opening our first mini-store called Market309 at Logan Recreational Center where we will sell affordable fresh produce.

Peoria Grown would like to make a difference in how emergency food is provided, particularly for children who are forming lifelong eating habits. The long-term goal is to see a decrease in serious health issues in our lower income populations.

- * \$90 covers the materials to build a Pop-Up Fruit Stand, from carpentry to art supplies for a local artist to paint.
- * \$100 replenishes food at one of our fruit stands.
- * \$150 allows our dietitians to buy necessary supplies and ingredients for our cooking classes.

Phoenix Community Development Services

(Phoenix CDS)

Having a safe and stable place to live is the foundation of well-being. The pandemic has shaken this foundation, especially for people who were already struggling. There are now more people who are unable to pay their rent and are afraid to leave their homes for essentials. Food insecurity is a major issue. The consequences have been particularly devastating for the homeless. Closures of public buildings have removed access to the restroom facilities many relied on to maintain their hygiene. Proper hygiene is especially important for a population who are already at higher risk for poor health and contracting COVID-19. In addition to health benefits, good hygiene has positive effects on mental well-being and the ability to secure employment.

***Phoenix CDS* is serving our community by:**

- * Helping homeless secure the permanent housing.
- * Providing health education and distributing PPE and hygiene supplies to the homeless.
- * Addressing food insecurity. *Phoenix CDS* has distributed over **19,100** nutritious meals in the last six months.
- * Providing a safe home for people who need support to live independently due to a disability.
- * Providing financial assistance for homeless prevention. Since the onset of the pandemic, *Phoenix CDS* has distributed \$404,000 in rent and utility assistance to families-in-need to prevent them from losing their homes once the suspension on evictions is lifted.
- * Bringing a mobile hygiene unit to our community. Hygiene On Wheels Independence Empowered (HOWIE) is a truck equipped with bathroom and laundry facilities to give those living on the streets access to the hot showers and clean clothing necessary to maintain personal hygiene, reduce risk of infection, and improve well-being.

Current needs include hygiene and personal care supplies, basic household goods, and food.

“...For I was hungry
And you gave me food,
I was thirsty
And you gave me drink,
I was a stranger
And you welcomed me,
I was naked
And you clothed me,
I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison,
And you came to me.”

Matthew 25: 37-39

Your 2020 Missions Committee

Greg Johnston ♦ Karen Henderson
Committee Co-Moderators

David Bailey	Jim Rosenbaum
Marylee Bales	Linda Sahn
Karen Calder	Rick Snarr
Carol Lavick	Sally Stone
Theresa Pfeiffer	Janet Vaughn
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- Center for Prevention of Abuse Midwest Food Bank
- Crittenton Centers Neighborhood House
- Dream Center Peoria Paws Giving Independence
- Elite Peoria Grown
- Phoenix Community Development Services

Please make your single check payable to First Federated Church.
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NAME: _____ AMOUNT: _____



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