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'Tis especially the season for giving

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'Tis especially the season for giving

Summary: 'Tis the season for generosity and with the holiday season comes a renewed sense of commitment to help others and a heightened awareness of the civic engagement opportunities that surround us.

(December 15, 2008)-'Tis the season for generosity and with the holiday season comes a renewed sense of commitment to help others and a heightened awareness of the civic engagement opportunities that surround us.

Community Service and Volunteerism in the Office of Student Activities at the University of Minnesota, Morris, along with the “service theme floor” in David C. Johnson Independence Hall—an on-campus student residence—and other student organizations, staff and faculty at UMM, are working together and partnering with off-campus groups in a variety of holiday giving projects.

“It’s easy to get UMM students on board, especially with a project that has the potential to make children happy,” said Carol McCannon, coordinator for Community Service and Volunteerism at UMM. “Students, as well as staff and faculty, are eager to pitch in to help with new projects as well as those that have been going on in the Morris community for years.”

During the holiday season the Ranch House at the Best Northland Prairie Inn will provide a \$1 lunch coupon to anyone who drops off a toy, which will then be donated to the Stevens County Toys for Tots drive. Toys can also be dropped off at the UMM Student Center as well as Blakely Hall and the Regional Fitness Center.

Donate to the “mitten tree,” located in the Student Center lobby, by bringing new mittens, hats and scarves. These items will be shared with Sam’s House – A Home for Orphaned and Abandoned Children and the Stevens County Toys for Tots Drive.

The Adopt-A-Grandparent program seeks to strengthen communication and interaction between UMM students and older adults in the Morris community through fostering intergenerational relationships. Students enjoy sharing time with an older adult in projects such as quilting to just enjoying each other’s company. The Adopt-A-Grandparent Program at UMM is in cooperation with the City of Morris/UMM COPC partnership and is funded in part by the HUD – Community Outreach Partnership Centers program.

Not only during the holidays, but a year ‘round example of giving are Birthday Buddy Boxes that are assembled, decorated to be party-ready and distributed to the Stevens County Food Shelf. Glenwood resident Phil Stumpf donated 20 teddy bears to be included in future boxes. This birthday-in-a-box provides the party ingredients for children celebrating birthdays whose families rely on the food shelf for basic needs. The boxes’ contents were donated by UMM staff and faculty and included a variety of items from a small stocking stuffer, gift bags and tissue paper, cake mix, frosting, candles, balloons, paper plates and napkins to toothbrushes, socks, books, art and school supplies and more.

Keep in mind that food shelves stock runs low this time of year. Bring cash, non-perishable items and hygiene products

at the Office of Student Activities and the items will be delivered for you to the Stevens County Food Shelf.

Other projects have included: snow shoveling for Morris senior citizens, assembling Thanksgiving and holiday baskets with the Stevens County Food Shelf, and providing assistance in putting up signs for the Morris Area Chamber of Commerce Parade of Lights. Students Today Leaders Forever are making holiday cards for children who will be in the hospital over the holidays, and Lutheran Campus Ministries and Adopt-a-Grandparent groups are caroling at the West Wind Village, Grand View Apartments and Skyview facility in Morris.

For more information about Community Service and Volunteerism in Student Activities at UMM, call (320) 589-6083.

Photo: Student volunteers Hanna Dahleen (elf), Ian Philbrick (snowman), John Jones (soldier) and Veronica Yang (seated to left of Santa), along with Carol McCannon CS&V coordinator (seated front, far right) join with the Morris Area Chamber of Commerce staff, Karen Arnold (standing, right) and Kathleen Albert (seated to right of Santa) during the Chamber's Pictures With Santa.

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