



## Christmas Celebration 2022--Sharing God's Gifts & Bringing Hope

While continuing to recover from the pandemic, St. Vincent de Paul hosted the 2022 Christmas Celebration on December 5, 10, 12, and 17, 2022 from roughly noon to 4:00 p.m. Some families also came on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Once again, Theresa Zimnawoda took the lead with her daughter, Sarah serving as Co-Chair. The event was widely publicized to Brown County families through direct mailings, Facebook, church bulletins, contacts with Brown County Township trustees, the Brown County Backpack Program, the Brown County School's Parent Square website and by word of mouth. Becky McCarty and Patty Lindley promoted the event via social media. An on-line scheduling system managed by Kevin Preuss was used to recruit volunteers. All event dates required two shifts each with at least nine volunteers. Volunteers from Church of the Lakes in Nineveh, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Agnes Catholic Church, St. Agnes Youth, St. David's Episcopal Church, TRIAD, and the Northern Brown County Food Alliance signed up for roles such as parking Lot greeter, helpers at the book, hats and gloves, toy and miscellaneous stations, as well as Santa's Helper. Masks were encouraged but not required. Social distancing was observed with three households being invited in the building at any one time. Those waiting their turn were offered an opportunity to select coats, household items, and toiletry items from the outside porch area. **A total of 138 different households made selections for 552 children and grandchildren.** More than 1500 volunteer hours were logged towards the event. Dozens of community partners and faith communities provided volunteers and/or donated items: Church of the Lakes in Nineveh, St. Agnes Church, St. Barnabas Catholic School in Greenwood, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, Brown County Presbyterian Fellowship, Brown County Sheriff's Department, Tri-Kappa, Glass Slipper, St. Agnes Guild and I Support the Girls, Inc.

Hats, gloves, and breath-taking knitted items were donated by Betsy Kolar and by Natalie Lavengood's family. Natalie continued knitting even during her final illness. Rita Simon scoured dozens of stores looking for sales as well as thrift shops all year long and also accumulated items from other Brown County knitters. Jonathan Bolte secured 500 age-appropriate books from Half-Price Books in Bloomington. Denise Hammack, manager of a local store, organized a campaign resulting in carloads of gifts. The Chamber of Commerce hosted the Light Parade and merchants donated 7 large bags of toys. Church of the Lakes collected items with a special focus on teen gifts. A Giving Tree at St. Agnes resulted in 114 items. Midwest Foods donated candy. Alan Schwenk brought firewood and Mary Perez supplied fire starters. Kroger Corporation donated \$500 towards the purchase of turkeys and hams as well as generously discounting some items. All during the event, volunteers stocked rolling carts of household goods, personal care items, clothing and coats for the "Porch" where families could self-select while waiting their turn.

Christmas Celebration Recap of the 552 Served

Ages	Boys	Girls	Ages	Boys	Girls	Ages	Boys	Girls	Ages	Boys	Girls
<1	6	5	6	25	22	12	15	12	18	9	7
1	8	10	7	15	14	13	14	12	19+*	3	0
2	11	21	8	12	29	14	16	19	Total	255	299
3	16	18	9	13	16	15	15	7	*Special Needs Youth		
4	17	15	10	4	15	16	12	11			
5	17	32	11	11	18	17	9	14			

Theresa and John Zimnawoda were the primary drivers of the event along with their daughter, Sarah, who served as co-chair with her mother, Theresa. Other family members, Kylene, Jake, Jared, Nate, Mila, Emmett and Valerie contributed by watching for seasonal sales, prepackaging items, helping with set-up in addition to working the event. Sarah spent hours shopping throughout the year, watching for sales, helping with inventory and planning as well as assembling the stocking stuffers. Sandy Scheidler, Cheryl Dixon and Cindy Peck along with other "sorting volunteers" identify and set aside items and also stocked the rolling carts for the "Porch." John and Angie Aumage, John Schaffner, Jonathan and Rosey Bolte, and Shirley Boardman provided organizational support. The Food Pantry was open 6 days in December between 10:00 a.m. and noon and distributed 15,175 pounds of food to 915 individuals. We are overwhelmed with gratitude and know that this report doesn't capture all that happened nor all who contributed!

Photos and additional information may be found on our website: [stvincentdepaulbrowncounty.com](http://stvincentdepaulbrowncounty.com)