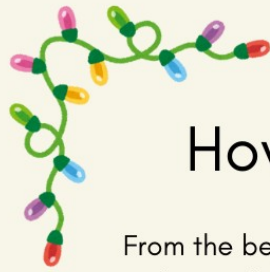




What is Holly House?

Holly House began in 2006 when its founder, working at a local foodbank, realized the families she served did not have the resources or ability to provide their children with new gifts, warm clothes, and necessities during the holidays. Financial insecurity and homelessness, or the threat of homelessness is a very real concern to some of our families, in these situations it is often the children that suffer in silence. Some families live in sub-standard housing and in extreme cases their cars and shelters, living paycheck to paycheck going without the essentials. In the winter time, their children are cold, often going to school without socks or underwear and going to bed at night without warm pajamas or blankets. During these difficult times and the economy, it is difficult for our families to provide adequate food and housing for their children. Christmas is meager and often non-existent as parents struggle to meet basic needs and do not have the resources to provide a celebration. The children going without the simple fun and joy of the holiday season and receiving gifts and toys. Many of these students are already struggling to participate fully in school and trying to fit in, they feel particularly forgotten and left out during the holidays.



How It Works

From the beginning our goal has been to provide comfort, joy, and hope to the children and families in our community. In its first year Holly House reached 430 children. Over the years, the need has grown, and Holly House now serves more than 2,000 low-income children, from infants to 17 years old. We serve local children in the Edmonds School District, which includes a large immigrant population that speak up to 38 different languages. Some of our schools have a population of up to 85% of children are living at or below the federal poverty level.

Holly House is a huge operation, requiring year-round planning, organizing, ~100 volunteers to run this four day event. This is a beautiful shopping experience for parents and ultimately the children.



All year, Holly House collects and organizes donations of new pajamas, books, socks, underwear, scarves, hats, toys, stocking stuffers and other gifts in preparation for the Holly House complimentary "store" in December. Parents come the day of the event and are paired up with a personal shopper who takes them through an array of gift stations where they can select gifts for free for each of their children.

In such a difficult time, the cheer we bring to the parents is incredible, many of them have tears streaming down their faces so grateful for the help and support. We hear over and over, without Holly House their children would not have a Christmas.

Holly House is for adult shoppers only, it comes as a complete surprise to the children. This allows the parents the opportunity to decide what they will tell their children - Did Santa bring the gifts? Were the parents able to provide them due to a last minute miracle? Or do they share that the amazing people in their community gave to them through Holly House? Giving parents the choice to share in their own way offers more than joy and warmth it offers dignity.