



HOLIDAY BASKETS 2011

Starter Kit - Holiday Baskets FAQs (Drives, Donation Drop Off, Volunteering)

When and Where does Holiday Baskets take place?

Holiday Baskets takes place in the lower grandstands at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Staff and volunteers convert the football field-sized venue into a “warehouse” store to create a shopping experience for our families in need. Set up is a long process and takes about 4 weeks: November 21 through December 15, 2011. Families registered for this program have a “shopping” appointment on one of our three distribution days: December 16, 17, and 18.

DRIVES

What is a DRIVE?

This is just another word for a “collection” of donated items. Driving a vehicle really has nothing to do with it. From a 2-month long school collection of jackets, to a personal or office holiday party that requests that guests bring a new toy, DRIVES from the community are incredibly important. Whether it’s one item or a thousand, every donation counts!

When should I start my drive?

Some drives begin in October, but November and December are the most popular months with our participating groups. **In any case, try to schedule your drive so that it ENDS by December 15th or sooner.**

What is the last day we can give Holiday Baskets our collected items?

We accept items up through the last day of distribution, BUT our preferred deadline to accept collected items is **DECEMBER 15, 2011**. We need time to sort everything before distribution to families takes place on December 16, 17, and 18. If your drive must end later than December 15, please coordinate with Katy Mikelman at kmikelman@crcncc.org or (760) 230-6304.

What types of items do you need?

- **Non-Perishable Food – HIGH NEED**
- NEW Toys (all ages)
- NEW or Gently Used: Bikes, Blankets, Jackets/Coats, Baby Car Seats
- Overstock items from hotels and businesses (LINENS, TOWELS, Novelties)

*For more examples, please download a copy of our **Holiday Baskets Guide**.*

How long should I run my drive?

This is up to you. Some groups like to create a sense of urgency by allowing only one set date to collect items. Others will have donation boxes out for up to two months. In any case, publicity by email, posting of fliers, announcements in newsletters, etc., is very important. You want to constantly remind people that you need them to help out.

I've never done a drive—do you have any examples?

Here are a few examples of different types of drives organized in the past:

1. Two people teamed up to publicize a food donation drive among Olivenhain residents. They taped fliers to paper grocery bags and delivered these to residents. The flier asked residents to fill the bags with non-perishable food or other gifts for families in need and drop them off at a meeting hall on a designated Saturday. The response was amazing. Several volunteers collected these bags and dropped them off at our distribution center at the Del Mar Fairgrounds.
2. A PTA leader at a local elementary school chose a 3-day period for her drive to collect toys. She publicized this in advance for several weeks in newsletters, classroom announcements, and letters to parents.
3. A local Cub Scout pack arranged to have a food drive at a supermarket on a designated Saturday. A Boy Scout group picked up the collected food and delivered it to our distribution site.
4. A company publicized Holiday Baskets in newsletters. Employees were asked to drop new toys off at a collection box in the main lobby. This drive lasted 6 weeks, but reminders were sent every week. Employees who didn't want to shop were given the option of donating to a cash fund. One staff member used that cash fund to buy more toys for the drive. (Churches and other large organizations often run drives like this one).
5. An organization held its annual holiday party in early December. The invitations included a request for guests to bring a blanket for a needy family. Community Resource Center sent a volunteer to the holiday party to collect the blankets at the holiday party check-in table.
6. A group of friends chose an item to collect and they turned it into a few weeks of competitive fun. The person who collected the most by the deadline was treated to dinner!
7. One company with limited storage space decided to sell Turkey Tickets (\$10 each) and Holiday Wish Tickets (open amount) instead of collecting items. They sold over \$2,000 in tickets and gave Community Resource Center a check to buy turkeys and other items that were still needed for families. Community Resource Center can provide you with Turkey Tickets and Holiday Wish Tickets upon request.

These are just some examples. There is no one "right" way to run a drive. As long as you publicize and get people interested, you'll be successful. Make sure you

explain that the Holiday Baskets Program is the largest distribution program of its kind because over 200 groups work together to make this a success.

What is the minimum size for a drive group?

There is no minimum. We've had several individuals run successful drives at work or in their neighborhoods.

Do the items have to be new?

For safety reasons, TOYS must be NEW. Otherwise, almost all other items may be new or GENTLY USED. We're a very green distribution program!

See the Holiday Baskets Guide for information about this for each item category.

What can you provide to help me publicize my drive?

Download the 2011 Holiday Baskets flier template from our Website. This template is in MS-Word, so just replace the sample text with your details and you're ready to go!

DONATION DROP OFF (or Pick Up)

How do I get my items to you?

Our Encinitas Thrift Store at **111 "C" Street in Encinitas** has a Donation Center that accepts all Holiday Baskets items from **9AM to 5PM daily** (closed on Thanksgiving Day and the day after). We have trucks available to pick up your items if your group runs a larger drive. Email Katy Mikelman at kmikelman@crcncc.org or call (760) 230-6304 to set up pick up times.

When can I drop off items at the [Del Mar Fairgrounds](#)?

We begin accepting items at the fairgrounds on December 1, but you must have an appointment so that we can be sure to have staff at the site to meet you. Also gate and parking instructions are subject to change from day to day. Call us first to save yourself some grief. If your group is signed up for a volunteer shift, you can bring your donations with you.

Please email Katy Mikelman at kmikelman@crcncc.org to confirm before you head to the fairgrounds.

[Still Want to Take a Chance Without A Drop-Off Appointment for the Fairgrounds?](#)

Ok—but remember, we cannot guarantee that this information won't change:

[Entry Gate for Donations at the Del Mar Fairgrounds:](#) Solana Gate **Building:** Grandstands (this is the tallest structure at the fairgrounds (four stories). It's right on the horse track.

[Unload Areas:](#)

VOLUNTEERING

Do I need to sign up in advance to volunteer?

YES. Because of the size of our distribution, we need to book volunteers for tasks in advance. We're so busy at the venue that we're not set up to schedule walk-in volunteers.

How long are volunteer shifts?

Volunteer shifts are at least 2-4 hours long. You may request longer hours.

What are the “work” times available to volunteers?

A schedule of available shifts is published on our Website at www.crcncc.org (go to the Holiday Baskets page).

Again, volunteers need to sign up in advance.

Can I bring donations with me when I come to volunteer?

Absolutely! See the Holiday Baskets Guide for the types of items we need.

Do I have to volunteer with a group or can I volunteer as an individual?

We accept groups, pairs, and individuals.

Is there a minimum or maximum group size?

We accept a limited number of large groups (20+ people) depending on the types of tasks we have. **Ideal group sizes include 10-15 people.** We like that size because it's easier to assign tasks. There is no minimum. We will book groups larger than 20 people on a case-by-case basis (typically these extra-large groups are assigned to major food packing tasks, etc).

Can our family volunteer?

We treat families like any group. We'll put you to work wherever we have needs. We typically expect a group to commit to a 2 or 4-hour shift, but we understand that families may need to pare down this time. For safety reasons, **we advise against bringing infants or toddlers** to the venue, which is quite cold and often crowded with people moving bulky or heavy objects. Younger children may participate with their parents, but must be accompanied and supervised at all times.

What is the minimum age to volunteer?

Volunteer groups should be made up of participants ages **13 and up**.

How can children 12 and under be a part of Holiday Baskets?

Our ***Holiday Baskets Education Program*** encourages educators to organize a drive that teaches children the value of giving back. For example, a “Used Jacket” drive encourages each child to donate something he or she owns. There are many learning opportunities possible through a drive. Many teachers also book a tour of the distribution venue in which their students deliver and help to sort their own

donations. Tours usually take about 30 minutes, and sorting experience activity can take anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the teacher's goals. Participating youth groups must have adequate numbers of adult chaperones. Any youth group may request a tour. Families with children too young to volunteer are also invited to book a tour. Contact Suzie Colby at scolby@crcncc.org or (760) 230-6305

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL Minors:

- Any youth volunteer must be under adult supervision at all times.
- Children may NOT be dropped off unsupervised.
- Individual teens are permitted to volunteer without accompanying parents on a case-by-case basis. Ask when you call or email to sign up.

How should I dress?

The lower grandstand building is cold, so wear or bring a coat or jacket, and wear layers. Volunteer tasks may involve sorting through items, unloading, putting items together, etc., so wear casual, comfortable clothing. Most volunteers wear jeans or sweat suits. Again, the building is cold, so we dress for the outdoors even if we're in the building all day. Note: wearing a hat or knit cap will keep you warmer, too. The same attire is appropriate for distribution day volunteers. Comfortable shoes are also a must—you will be walking on cold concrete floors while at the venue.

Do I have to pay for parking?

The Del Mar Fairgrounds does not require Holiday Baskets volunteers to pay for parking, as long as you come through the **designated gate**. After you sign up for your volunteer shift, details will be emailed to you with directions to the fairgrounds and what gate to enter. We don't publish this in advance because special events at the fairgrounds can change the gates and lots we are asked to use.

HOLIDAY BASKETS CONTACT INFO

Katy Mikelman
Email: kmikelman@crcncc.org
Office: (760) 230-6304

I read and send emails by mobile.
kmikelman@crcncc.org

Please note that we receive an especially high-volume of calls for Holiday Baskets from November 15 to December 19. We do our best to respond quickly to your questions. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please contact Suzie Colby at scolby@crcncc.org or call (760) 230-6305.

Starter Kit - Holiday Baskets – Volunteer Offer

Please email us to schedule a day to volunteer. Get the process started by emailing responses to the items below to Katy Mikelman at kmikelman@crcncc.org.

- 1. Name of your group/business/organization. If you are an individual or family, list your name.**
- 2. Contact person and phone number**
- 3. Are you a returning group or is this your first time?**
- 4. Dates available (please provide as many as possible—we will choose what is open on our schedule)**
- 5. Number in group**
- 6. If your group includes minors, please indicate age range.**
- 7. If your group includes minors, please confirm that adult(s) will be present to supervise.**

NOTE: Please let us know if your group is also bringing donations. This can change the types of tasks we assign your group. For example, if your group runs a large food drive, we would schedule you to help sort or box your own donations, etc.