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By:

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Above: Volunteers packing boxes at a No Senior Without Christmas event earlier this month.

If the Tri-County TRIAD has anything to do with it, no senior will go without a Christmas. Every year, the organization delivers 350 boxes of household items, non-perishable food, and holiday cheer to 350 needy senior citizens in the tri-county region.

Erica Bishop is the Chair, and has volunteered for five years with the Tri-County TRIAD, a collaboration among seniors, law enforcement and community members. Bishop spoke about how East Lansing residents can get involved in the cause.

"We always say, spread the word," Bishop said. "Throughout the year, we are always looking for donors to assist with items like coffee and sweet treats to have at education events, sponsoring lunches for Lunch with a Purpose, and special items for outreach participants (socks, incontinence supplies, etc.)."

To successfully run the No Senior Without Christmas program, Bishop said it takes \$25,000 each year. Supporters may make tax-deductible monetary donations ^[2], contribute to the organization's GoFundMe, ^[3] volunteer their time ^[3], or be on the No Senior Without Christmas Planning Committee.

Bishop has been blown away by the amount of compassion and selfless giving she has seen within the program.

"There have been times throughout the year that I am absolutely overwhelmed by the giving," Bishop said. "Sam's Club and Kroger are just steady. They have always been supporters of our program. Playmakers gives 350 pairs of smart wool socks- that's huge! Two Men and a Truck always come through with boxes for us and this year even provided our mobile storage. About a week before the event this year Meijer's Mid-Michigan Regional office came through with a substantial donation that really allowed us to do some extras this year. They had seen information about the program on law enforcement Facebook and just wanted to be a part of it."

Many dedicated volunteers show up on a consistent basis, carving space out of their busy lives to donate their time. Since the organization's inception, Lansing, East Lansing and Meridian Township have been areas served. Over the past few years, the group has expanded to neighboring towns/counties.

"Outside of businesses, there are two things that stand out," Bishop said. "The first is, we have so many dedicated volunteers that just pour themselves into this project. It always stops me when someone is just so passionate about what we do, and all in."

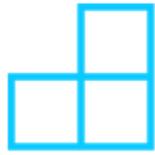
"The second standout for me is our recipients. Everyone on our list was sent to us because someone in their community recognized they were in need. We call all 350 people each year. Every year there are always a handful of people who say, "you know, I am grateful but I have this neighbor who needs it more." I'm grateful that we have enough support that we can say, "you know what, you get a box, and what is your neighbor's name? They get a box, too.?"

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