



## Press Release

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### CORPORATE SANTAS PULL TOGETHER IN TOUGH TIMES, MAKE CHRISTMAS WONDERFUL FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

ALBERTO CULVER, ROUNDY'S SUPERMARKETS AND VAN WAGNER COMMUNICATIONS LEAD][OUTPOURING OF GENEROSITY TO YOUTH HOME

December 17, 2009—In something right out of the last scene of Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life," a number of companies and countless individuals came to Mercy Home's rescue to save Christmas for hundreds of its former residents and their families.

In response to an urgent last-minute appeal from Mercy Home, donors dropped everything to bring food items and toys for the families who will gather at the youth home's West Side campus on Thursday evening.

When a corporate donor was unable to provide its annual donation of gifts and food because of the economy, Mercy Home sent out an urgent email appeal to friends and supporters. That email was distributed to the business networks of members of the Leader Council, a group of prominent professional women that provides educational opportunities for Mercy Home's young people. The result was an overwhelming response that will help make Christmas merrier for the men, women and children of Mercy Home's extended family.

"This is a truly humbling outpouring of generosity," said Fr. Scott Donahue, President and CEO of Mercy Home. "By coming to the aid of these families during this very troubled economy, these companies and individuals are the truest expression of the Christmas spirit."

In response to Mercy Home's appeal, Milwaukee-based Roundy's Supermarkets and Van Wagner Communications, the outdoor advertising company with offices in Chicago donated cases of soups, pastas, cereals and many canned and packaged foods to help these families in difficult times.

Alberto Culver, the beauty and personal care brands company which has an office in Melrose Park, IL pulled up to Mercy Home earlier this week with a truck full of toys,

sporting equipment and games for Thursday's celebration. The company also provided funds to underwrite the cost of the event. Many individual donors also made financial contributions or dropped off toys in response to this call for help.

Sue Bettman, who chairs Mercy Home's Leader Council thanked the many members of the council, and the corporate donors and individuals who took the time from their busy holiday preparations to secure and deliver donations to Mercy Home. "The way so many people pulled together on a moment's notice is an inspiration. It is truly a miracle and it reflects of the kind of good will that so many people out there have toward Mercy Home."

Each year, Mercy Home invites former residents to return with their families for a Christmas celebration complete with food, gifts, and an appearance from Santa Clause. The event is more than a reunion for fellow former residents. It also helps Mercy Home staff maintain a supportive, continued connection with former residents and to those people whose well-being effects their ongoing success more than anyone—their families.

With the downturn in the economy, many of these families are struggling. Making ends meet presents enough of a challenge—putting Christmas presents under the tree is a luxury many cannot afford.

Offering ongoing support for former residents is the mission of Mercy Home's aftercare program, which hosts the event. Aftercare helps former residents with things like help finding a job or a place to live, sorting through applications for admission and financial aid to college or other continuing education, providing scholarships in some cases, ongoing mentoring, or by simply directing them to another social service he or she might need to continue the progress made while living in Mercy Home's residential programs.

Some aftercare members are still teenagers, living back at home with their families after completing our program. Others are adults just starting out with first jobs, or home from college, or in some cases, building their own families. Regardless of their age or time away from Mercy Home, the aftercare program offers them resources to support their continued success for as long as is needed.

### **About Mercy Home for Boys & Girls**

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls has been a solution for kids in crisis since 1887. Our residential, aftercare, and mentoring programs provide safety and opportunity for more than 400 kids every year. Mercy Home is 99.7% privately funded and operates on two campuses in Chicago—a home for boys at 1140 W. Jackson Blvd. and a home for girls at 11600 S. Longwood Dr.

Please visit [mercyhome.org](http://mercyhome.org) to learn more.