



Helping hands: Goodfellows organizations throughout Oakland County prepare holiday food baskets (above) for area needy families. Firefighters in Farmington (right) help the local Goodfellows cause, soliciting donations from motorists.



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Jim Michelson



Goodfellows bring a yule message of goodwill

BY SUZANNE L. PARKER
STAFF WRITER

"No kiddie without a Christmas" is the pledge of the Old Newsboys' Goodfellow Fund of Detroit. And if Jim Michelson, Bloomfield Hills resident and president of the non-profit organization has anything to say about it, every child will have one.

"You're not dealing with life and death here," said Michelson, a Troy businessman whose Goodfellow organization has been raising money during the holiday season to buy Christmas baskets for needy children for 79 years. "You're dealing with health and hope and promise for children."

The Goodfellows organization started in Detroit in 1914 when James J. Brady brought together a handful of former newsboys who went back to their corners and sold newspapers again for donations. The money they raised was used to buy Christmas presents for Detroit children who had little hope for a plentiful Christmas.

While today's Goodfellows spend much of the year preparing for Christmas, the real drive begins in November. The Goodfellows raise money three ways for their Christmas baskets, which contain jeans, sweatshirts, gloves, scarves, socks, toys, books and other items.

The most well-known effort is Goodfellows Sales Day. Slated this year for Nov. 30, more than 300 members, some of them former newsboys, and members of the Detroit Police Department will sell special edition Goodfellows newspapers on the street.

The cost is any donation gives feel comfortable with.

After Sales Day, Goodfellow members will also begin a letter-writing campaign to families, friends and business associations soliciting donations.

"Much of the money is raised in the suburbs," Michelson said, "but it all goes back to the city and the children there."

For the third year in a row, the group held the annual Goodfellows Tribute Breakfast last Friday at the Westin Hotel in Detroit. Michelson said they were expecting more than 1,000 people to buy \$125 tickets to see Mike and Marlon Hiteh receive the 1992 Goodfellow of the Year award.

While the Goodfellows' goal of raising \$950,000 this year is the same as last year, it is because Knart Corp. made a one-time donation of 40,000 pairs of jeans this year.

Michelson expects the group to give out 43,000 packages to Detroit boys and girls, all identified by Detroit teachers and the school district as being in need.

"With the need for 43,000 packages, that's one out of three kids in the Detroit school system," Michelson said. "That's how great the need is."

Along with the gift baskets, which will be distributed beginning the week before Christmas, the Goodfellows also use the money they raise to sponsor three other programs for Detroit kids age 5 through 12. The Goodfellow Shoe program began when the group learned

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that more than 1,000 students weren't attending school because they didn't have shoes. Working with Sibley's Shoes, Goodfellows distributes vouchers to the children's families which can be redeemed at the shoe store.

The group also sponsors a camp and an emergency dental program to help make the children's lives easier year-round, Michelson said. No matter which program benefits, he said, all the money raised goes to the children. All overhead costs are paid for by the members themselves.

For Michelson, the Goodfellows is a life-long passion he learned from his father. A veteran Goodfellow, his father, Lawrence J. Michelson, has been a member of the organization for 60 years. As a child, Michelson said he can remember how important the Goodfellows' cause was to his father.

"It was a labor of love for him throughout the year," Michelson recalled. "From him, I learned that if you're more fortunate, you have a responsibility to give back."

While the Detroit Goodfellows Christmas drive is about to begin, other local Goodfellows groups are also preparing for the season of giving.

In Southfield, the Goodfellows are collecting donations, canned goods and packaged goods for distribution at the following locations: Southfield Civic Center, the Municipal Building lobby, Southfield Parks and Recreation offices, Southfield Public Library, the 46th District Court, the Public

Safety Building and the civic arena.

Additional drop-off sites in the area include the Beechwoods Center at Nine Mile Road and Beech, the Human Resources Building at Berg Road and Civic Center Drive, all five city fire halls, the Lathrup Village Municipal Building on Southfield Road, Munson cleaners on Southfield Road, the Heatherwood seniors complex on Civic Center Drive, J & C Cleaners on Ten Mile Road

and That Tobacco Shop on Town Center.

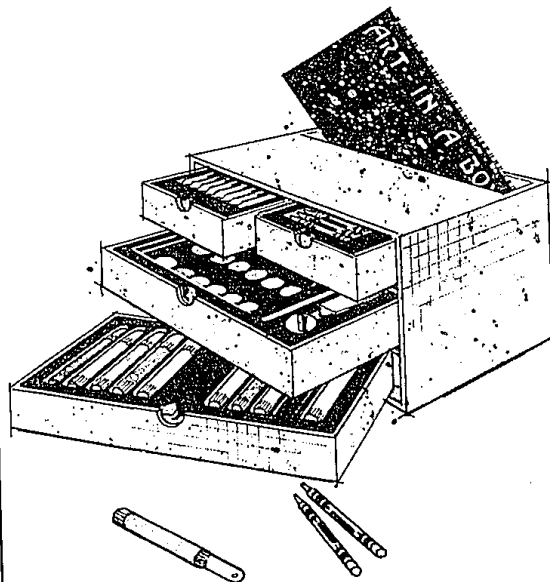
In Farmington, Goodfellows will hawk their newspapers around town on Friday, Nov. 27. During the Christmas season, they will also have a dress and shirt drive and a canned food drive. To make donations, contact the Farmington Area Goodfellows, c Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335.

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Back to work: It's that time of the year when old newsboys come out of retirement to sell special edition Goodfellows newspapers.

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