



Holiday Season, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding MOM's Sharing Christmas Program

Thank you for your interest in MOM's Sharing Christmas Program. We hope this FAQ will answer all of your questions. If not, please feel free to contact our Sharing Christmas Coordinator at 826-3415 or via email at sharingchristmas@momhelps.org. All inquiries will be responded to after October 17. The matching process takes time, so we thank you in advance for your patience.

Do I get to pick my family? MOM's Sharing Christmas Coordinators will complete the matching process off all donors and clients, however, we ask each donor what size family they would like to sponsor and recommend that donors spend not more than \$50 per person in their chosen family. Though we cannot guarantee that each special request will be met, we do make every attempt to honor special requests based upon the applications that have been received (i.e. families with children; families without children; elderly; etc.),

How do I know what to buy the family? Each family completes a Wish List that includes 3 "wishes" per family member, each with a value not to exceed \$50. You may purchase one or more gifts from the list or you may choose to purchase something else. You do not need to purchase all 3 items, rather, use the list as a guide. Please remain as close to the \$50 limit as possible. We encourage you to be creative (things on clearance, homemade goods, etc.!).

What if they ask for something over \$50? The items on the lists are those that the family members "wish" for. In some cases, the "wishes" may exceed \$50. Feel free to skip those items and purchase something else on the list or something that you think the family member might enjoy. You can also be creative. We do ask that each item given to clients be brand new. However, if a child asks for a new bike (clearly over \$50 and you have a gently used bike to "donate," you may call the family you have adopted to inquire whether or not they might like this item. You may then use the \$50 allotment to purchase something such as a bike helmet, bike basket or other related item.

How do I find out more information if I have questions about my list? You must call the family with whom you have been matched directly. All families have agreed to be contacted as a qualification for signing up for the program.

What if the gifts I purchase need to be returned or exchanged? Please include gift receipts for each member of the family you have adopted.

Should the gifts be wrapped? Will the children know who they're from? **Please wrap the gifts and address them to whom they are intended.** In some cases, parents put gifts under the tree and say they have come from the parents themselves. We don't discourage this, as it is often important for parents to show children that they are providing for them. Your donations to families help to relieve a lot of stress. Sometimes parents say the gifts are from Santa, and in other cases, parents tell the children that the gifts were donated. No matter how they are presented, what's most important is that as a donor, you have given from the heart to families in need. You may wish to put gifts in a garbage bag so they are less obvious to the children whose parents may wish to keep the donation secret. You may work this out directly with the parents. **Also, if dropping off gifts at the MOM office for more than one family, PLEASE bag each family's gifts separately and be certain that every gift includes a name and NOT a code or other identifying information that was not specifically requested by MOM.**

Do I need to purchase gifts for the adults in the family? Yes! Our program provides for entire families, not just children. In many cases, adults in families haven't been able to purchase things for themselves in quite some time. A gift is always a joyous blessing and surprise.

How do the gifts get to the families? Because MOM has very little storage space, we ask that donors consider delivering gifts directly to families. Families often enjoy meeting the donors. Some donors and families prefer to have donations dropped off at picked up at a neutral location. We ask donors to remain as

flexible as possible when choosing the option they prefer, but understand if you are interested in one method or another.

When do gifts need to be delivered? Gifts should be delivered to families between December 10-23.

Many families leave within a week of Christmas to visit family, etc. School will be out on December 21 and we want to assure gifts are delivered by then. If you choose to drop off at MOM, you will be assigned a drop off date. MOM's office hours are 9:00am – 4:30pm. **We will be open until 5:45 pm on Monday, December 12 and on Thursday, December 15 for your convenience.** Please do not to drop off gifts later than your assigned date because the family you have purchased gifts for has an assigned pick up date. It is possible to drop off early if that is more convenient for you. **If you are dropping off gifts for a large number of families, please arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to closing on your assigned date.**

Why do families ask for things that seem unnecessary when they are in need? We all enjoy items of luxury and comfort. Such things add quality to our lives. At MOM we are able to help with many things that our families need, but few of the luxury items they really want. Our goal is not to judge, but only to provide.

Why do families ask for things that they are in need of instead of toys and fun items? There are many reasons, but often families feel that these items would make them most happy. Since the purpose of our program is to add joy and comfort to people's lives, it is okay to give them these types of items. Again, we do not judge, we merely provide.

Can I donate a Christmas tree or ornament to my family? Each year we get many requests for trees so that families can have something around which to celebrate and add the Christmas spirit to their homes. In general, families are thrilled with real or artificial trees. Any ornaments, lights or trees that you can donate, even older ones from your collection, are welcomed and appreciated. You must make arrangements with the family if you would like to donate a holiday tree. MOM unfortunately does not have the space to store them.

Can I purchase my family food or a meal? If you are interested in doing this, you may call and ask the family with whom you have been matched. We never discourage food donations. If you have items to donate you may also consider donations to the Food Pantry.

Will the families be contacting me as a donor? The families only know that they have been matched with a donor, but not specifically who their donor is. You are free to call and talk with your family and you may choose to provide your contact information if you wish, but this is not required. Donors often choose to remain anonymous.

What do I do if my family doesn't speak English? In all cases we've asked families to identify someone who can help translate. If you need to contact someone in your adopted family and have difficulty communicating, MOM does have a part time, Spanish speaking Case Manager that may be able to assist you. She can be reached at 826-3405.

Will my family be getting gifts from elsewhere? Families may receive gifts from other family members or friends. Each client family has been screened and determined by MOM staff to be financially eligible to participate in this program. We do not require that families receive no other gifts. In fact, we think it is wonderful if we are not a family's only support network.

Have the clients been screened for eligibility? Each program participant is screened by a MOM Case Manager and has been determined to be in need. In some cases, donors have brought gifts to families and have felt, by seeing certain items in the home, that perhaps they are not in need. Due to confidentiality and privacy issues, we cannot tell you WHY a family is qualified. Perhaps they have been laid off or have acquired an illness that has drained their resources. Please give from the heart and know that your purchases are going to help make someone's holidays much brighter.