



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**November 18, 2020**

**Jonnycake Center of Westerly Helps Make Holiday Magic Come True for Hundreds of Local Families**

*Adopt-a-Family Gift Cards, Holiday Meal Assistance, Free Socks, and Face Masks Provide Love and Care for Community*

**Westerly, RI – The Jonnycake Center of Westerly** announced that over the weekend of November 14 and 15, 2020, **families of 498 local children received holiday financial assistance** through the Center’s **Adopt-a-Family holiday gift assistance program**, and **1,214 individuals from 447 households received assistance** to purchase necessities for traditional Thanksgiving and holiday dinners.

The Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s Social Services department coordinates an annual large-scale **Adopt-a-Family program** which matches donors to local families with underserved children. Throughout the fall, families sign up to be adopted and individuals sign up as donors. Ordinarily, donors are provided with a list of each child’s specific needs and wants, and donors procure the requested items and leave them with the Jonnycake Center of Westerly for staff and volunteers to sort and distribute. The distribution usually takes place in early December.

With all aspects of the Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s operations affected by changes to public health guidelines under the COVID-19 threat, the Adopt-a-Family program was modified for 2020 to still provide holiday magic for local kids, albeit in an adjusted format. As the Jonnycake Center was unable to welcome the large groups of volunteers who are relied on to sort through donated presents, and without the ability to safely quarantine the donated gifts, the 2020 Adopt-a-Family program took the form of a **drive-through financial disbursement** in lieu of physical gifts. Each registered family was given gift cards of a comparable value to the presents that each child would ordinarily receive. The gift cards, purchased and donated from local businesses as well as national retailers, were distributed earlier than normal so that families could use the cards to purchase gifts ahead of the holiday shopping season.

Aside from assistance for presents, gift cards were disbursed to clients who had registered for financial assistance to help purchase supplies for traditional Thanksgiving and/or holiday meals.

Clients who came the weekend of November 14 were also given free, brand-new, high-quality pairs of **socks** that had been donated to the Jonnycake Center of Westerly by **Bombas** (part of a 2,500-pair donation), and Jonnycake staff and volunteers gave away over **3,500 new face masks** to clients and their families.

“That has been such a challenging year for so many in our community, and despite the rising need for help, we’ve also been overjoyed to see a rise in assistance,” said **Lee Eastbourne**, Jonnycake Center of Westerly Executive Director. “Since opening the Adopt-a-Family process in August, we heard from countless people who were eager to open their hearts and their wallets to support those less fortunate than themselves. With so much that has changed since we last ran the Adopt-a-Family program in 2019, we were humbled that the community adapted quickly and turned out in strength to offer help whatever way they could. Between donors, adoptees, Jonnycake staff, and volunteers, we all pulled together to make the holidays a little brighter for those who are struggling.”

The Jonnycake Center of Westerly extends its sincere gratitude to every person who helped contribute to the 2020 Adopt-a-Family program. Although the primary distribution weekend is over, more children and families are in need to be adopted through the Center’s waitlist. To donate in support of them, please contact Lee Eastbourne at (401) 377-8069, ext. 106 or email [leastbourne@jonnycake.org](mailto:leastbourne@jonnycake.org).

To learn about the Center’s Social Services outreach efforts, community resources, on-site Food Pantry, public Thrift Store, and volunteering opportunities, visit [jonnycake.org](http://jonnycake.org) or call (401) 377-8069.

**About The Jonnycake Center of Westerly**

The Jonnycake Center of Westerly’s mission is to provide a continuum of services in cooperation with other agencies in our service area to assist people through crisis situations and work with each individual to find a path out of dependency toward self-sufficiency. For more information, visit [jonnycake.org](http://jonnycake.org), become a fan on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/jonnycake.org), follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/jonnycake.org) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/jonnycake.org), or call (401) 377-8069.

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