

Empower. Uplift. Unite.

Joining Hands for Joy!



Family Giving Tree™



CASE STATEMENT
Holiday Wish Drive
2024

fgt.org

Introduction

Holiday Wish Drive

- To avoid gift envy please keep gift cost between \$25 and \$50.
- With this side out, firmly tape only the top and bottom of this card to the unwrapped gift with clear tape.
- Please purchase a pre-packaged toothbrush(es) and attach it to the gift with clear tape too.
- Tax receipts are available at fgt.org/donate.

NAME: **Noah** Zone: **B119**

Age: 7 yrs ID: 45

Gender: Boy

WISH: Noah would love a Two Wheel Scooter with Helmet

For safety, please include a helmet.

Alternate Wish:
Large Dinosaur Toy with Remote

Return your gift to the person or place where you received this wish card by the posted date.

3/30/10 Design donated by Alexander Weiss Design, Inc.

The holidays often evoke images of joyful children unwrapping presents, but for many families in the Bay Area, this picture is a stark contrast to reality. Imagine a child, their worn shoes a constant reminder of their family's struggles, watching classmates eagerly share their holiday wish lists. Their parent, meanwhile, bears the heavy burden of providing, their heart aching with the inability to fulfill their child's wishes. These are the faces of holiday hardship and just the tip of the iceberg.

This scene, though heartbreaking, is just a glimpse into the broader issue of poverty in our region. As of 2023, 3.5 million individuals across the Bay Area face daily struggles that extend far beyond the holiday season.¹ Lack of access to stable housing, nutritious food, and reliable transportation creates a constant undercurrent of stress and insecurity, impacting every aspect of life.

Family Giving Tree recognizes this reality where financial hardship steals the simple joy of a holiday gift and the sense of connection receiving it brings and steps in to bridge this gap, ensuring that children, parents, and seniors experience the magic of the season. Through its annual Holiday Wish Drive, exact wished-for gifts are wrapped and distributed to thousands each year, bringing smiles and hope to those who need it most.

¹ Bay Area Equity Atlas. "Who is Low Income and Very Low Income in the Bay Area? (An Updated Look). January 27 2023. Accessed September 2023

Family Giving Tree

Mission: Connecting those who can give to those in need with educational support, gifts, and volunteerism.

Vision: We envision a world where giving brings joy, offers hope, and creates learning possibilities.

Values

Community: We foster an inclusive culture of volunteerism and philanthropy with people of all ages and backgrounds. We strive to inspire people to “pay it forward” by uplifting others in our community.

Kindness: We demonstrate genuine empathy and compassion in all that we do. We are advocates for treating people with respect and consideration. We make giving back a joyful experience.

Empowerment: We recognize that we don't all start from the same place in the world. Through community alliances, we provide those we serve with gifts and tools to give them the equitable opportunity to dream and grow.

Adaptability: We collaborate creatively to adapt and provide relevant resources to meet community needs. Family Giving Tree tests new ideas and explores innovative ways of delivering value to our community.

Accountability: We take the initiative to meet our commitments to each other and our volunteers, agencies, donors, and community. We are responsible stewards of the gifts we receive on behalf of those we serve.



Statement of Need

The Unique Challenges of Poverty in the Bay Area

Poverty in the Bay Area differs significantly from poverty in the rest of the U.S. due to the region's unique socioeconomic dynamics.

Exceptionally High Cost Of Living

The Bay Area has one of the highest costs of living in the nation, driven primarily by the competitive housing market. This means that even individuals and families with moderate

incomes may struggle to cover basic expenses like housing and utilities, food, health insurance, and transportation. While there isn't one definitive "poverty line" for the Bay Area, government-subsidized housing programs annually release income limits for qualifying families to determine eligibility. As of 2024, a household income of \$146,000 is considered low income and \$92,150 is considered very low income for a family of four in the South Bay.¹

In contrast, many other regions in the U.S. have a lower cost of living, particularly in rural areas or smaller cities. This means that a given income level can stretch further in those areas compared to the Bay Area. The Department of Health and Human Services has issued that for a family of four in the 48 contiguous states, the poverty line is \$31,200 annually in 2024.² However, this is widely considered inadequate for the Bay Area.

The high cost of housing in the Bay Area contributes to housing insecurity and homelessness. Many individuals and families struggle to find affordable housing, leading to overcrowding, displacement, or even living on the streets. While homelessness is a national issue, it is particularly acute in the Bay Area due to the housing crisis.³

Continued on next page.





Hidden Poverty

A significant portion of the local population consists of working poor or ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) individuals and families.⁴ These are households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level yet cannot afford necessities. This “hidden poverty” is often overlooked in traditional poverty measures but represents a significant challenge in the region. Meanwhile, the Bay Area is also home to a concentration of high-income workers and affluent communities. The stark income inequality contributes to a unique experience of poverty in the Bay Area, where those struggling financially may live in close proximity to affluent communities, highlighting the disparities.

Access to Resources and Support

Poverty in the Bay Area can have a significant impact on children and families, affecting

their health, education, and overall mental and physical well-being. While the region boasts a robust network of social services and non-profit organizations, access to these resources can be challenging for those experiencing poverty. Long waitlists, limited availability, and transportation barriers can hinder access to crucial support.⁵ While child poverty is a national issue, the unique challenges of poverty in the Bay Area can exacerbate these difficulties. Understanding these distinctions is necessary for developing effective strategies to alleviate the subtler hardships of poverty and uplift those in need in the region.

1 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “HOME Income Limits for California 2024.” Accessed November 2024.

2 Healthcare.gov. “Federal Poverty Level (FPL).” Accessed November 2024.

3 National Alliance to End Homelessness. “State of Homelessness.” Accessed November 2024.

4 United Way Bay Area. “ALICE.” Accessed November 2024.

5 Vallejo Sun. “Vallejo to Reopen Section 8 Wait List: What That Means for People Who Need Housing.” Accessed November 2024.

Holiday Wish Drive



A History and Track Record of Kindness

Family Giving Tree (FGT) has a strong track record of serving the Bay Area community. In the 35 years since its founding in 1990, FGT has provided over 2.2 million gifts and essential supplies to children, families, and seniors in need.

From its humble beginnings as an MBA project by co-founders Jennifer Cullembine and

Todd Yoshida that provided 2,010 gifts in its first year, HWD has grown to serve 44,167 individuals across 14 counties in 2023 alone.

Our deep roots in the community

and strong partnerships with local agencies allow us to effectively identify and address the unique needs of our neighbors. Family Giving Tree partners with over 450 local non-profit agencies and schools to ensure that gifts reach our intended recipients. These agencies work directly with individuals and families in need, helping them submit their wish lists or school supply needs. Family Giving Tree then collects these requests and works with donors and volunteers to fulfill them. We're proud of our track record of making a tangible difference in addressing the needs of the community.


While Family Giving Tree shares a common goal with several similar gift distribution

organizations and initiatives, it has a few distinct features:

- **Personalized Wish Fulfillment:** Unlike organizations that distribute pre-selected items, FGT focuses on fulfilling specific wishes, allowing recipients to request items they genuinely need or want, making the gifts more meaningful and ensuring they are truly useful to the recipient.
- **Year-Round Support:** While many of the listed organizations focus primarily on holiday gift-giving, FGT extends its support throughout the year with its Back-to-School Drive, ensuring that children have the necessary supplies to succeed in school.
- **Direct, Large-Scale Local Impact:** FGT concentrates its efforts on the San Francisco Bay Area, allowing for a deep understanding of the community's needs while still serving tens of thousands of individuals annually.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** FGT utilizes data and its very own Virtual Giving Tree (VGT) technology to streamline its operations, track donations, and ensure efficient distribution of resources, maximizing its impact and transparency.

FGT has received numerous awards and recognition for our work, including accolades from local media and community organizations. These external validations underscore our commitment to excellence and positive impact on the greater Bay Area region.

Holiday Wish Drive



Dear Family Giving Trees Staff, my name is Monika, I am 12 years old and my sister, Michelle, is 4 years old. We are grateful for the generous donations we have received, expressing our gratitude for the time and effort spent in spreading holiday joy. Your affection has made many smile! The awareness of people who strive to spread love and joy by offering assistance or small gifts brightens our hearts. Your endeavor to make children's holidays better lightens up our world. Many of us do not receive what we truly want for Christmas, so when you give us a present that we desire, it brings us so much joy. The sacrifices you make to make someone else's day better just make us even more grateful for the gifts you gave us. The amount of time, effort, and love you give by gifting those who aren't possibly content are appreciated by us. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity you gave us. Thanks to your kindness and consideration, you were able to spread cheer and joy during the holiday season. Your donations truly made a difference in those who received them and we cannot express our gratitude enough. Thank you for making such a positive impact on our community.

Sincerely yours, Monika

Strengthening the Community as a Whole

By providing essential items like warm clothing, blankets, and food, the Holiday Wish Drive helps meet basic physiological needs, especially for those experiencing poverty or homelessness, contributing to a sense of safety and security, particularly for children and families who may be experiencing instability or uncertainty.

The act of giving and receiving gifts also fosters a sense of connection and belonging within the community. It reminds recipients that they are valued and remembered, especially during the holiday season, which can be a time of isolation for some.

Receiving a personalized gift can boost a recipient's self-esteem and create a sense of being seen and understood. For children, receiving a wished-for toy can contribute to a sense of accomplishment and joy. When basic needs are met, individuals are more able to pursue personal growth and fulfillment.

In essence, the Holiday Wish Drive not only provides material assistance but also addresses emotional and social needs, contributing to a sense of well-being and belonging within the community. By supporting individuals at various stages in their journey to stability and self-sufficiency, the drive helps create a more compassionate and inclusive society where everyone feels valued and supported.

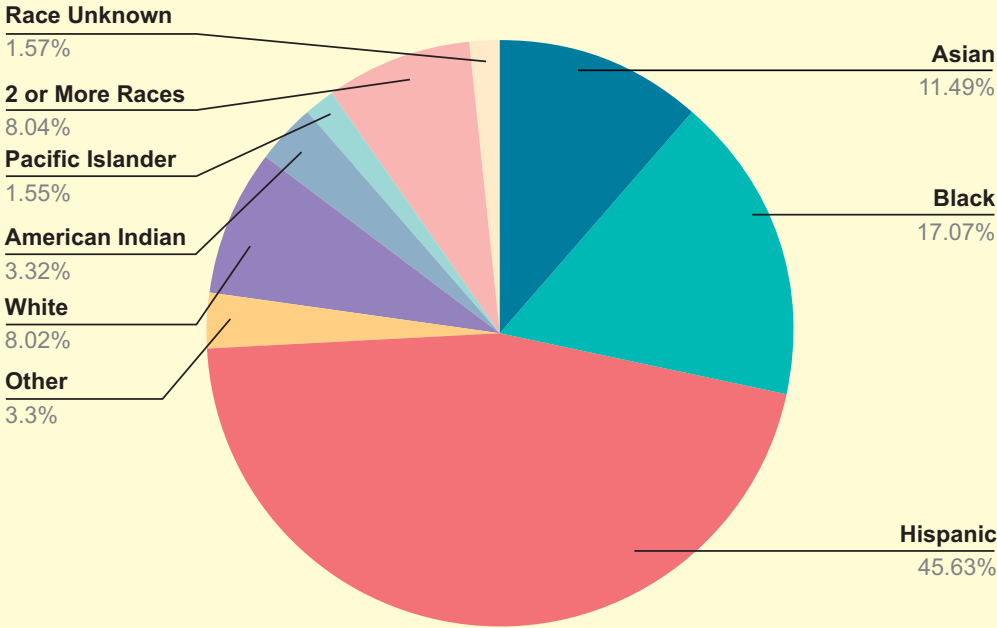
The impact of our programs is evident in the countless lives we touch. Supporters of Family Giving Tree's Holiday Wish Drive invest in the well-being of our community and bring joy to those who need it most. The community's generosity has helped ensure that an individual experiences the magic of the holidays and is reminded that someone cares.



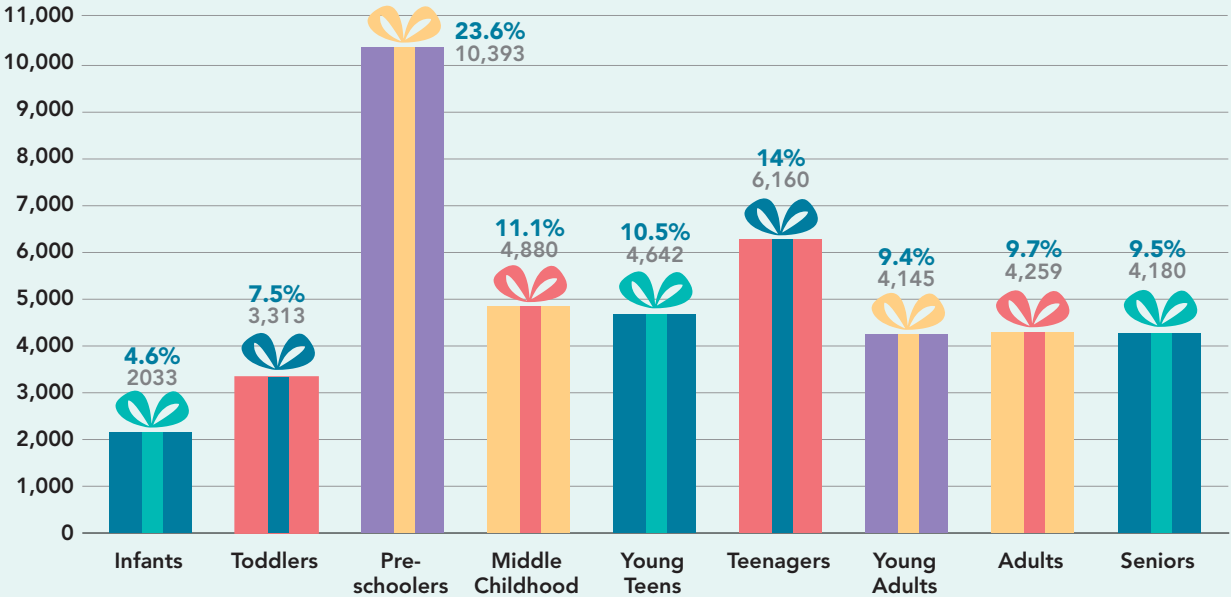
Holiday Wish Drive

DEMOGRAPHICS

ETHNICITIES SERVED



GIFTS DISTRIBUTED BY AGE



GENDER



COUNTIES SERVED

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Alameda | San Francisco | Santa Cruz |
| Contra Costa | San Benito | Solano |
| Marin | San Mateo | Sonoma |
| Monterey | San Joaquin | Stanislaus |
| Sacramento | Santa Clara | |



Family Giving Tree is fortunate to have a dedicated team of volunteers and staff who are passionate about serving their community. Our strong leadership and organizational commitment to continuous improvement and excellence enable us to efficiently manage large-scale drives and ensure that donations are effectively utilized.

Family Giving Tree aims to expand its reach and impact in the coming years, serving even more individuals and families in need.

We plan to strengthen our partnerships with local agencies and schools, develop new programs to address emerging needs, and leverage technology to further streamline operations.

Beginning in 2023, FGT has opened a waitlist for holiday wishes received after the wish registry deadline in an effort to fulfill as many wishes as possible.



How You Can Help

Youth Technology Center

Walmart Foundation



Join Us in Creating a Brighter Holiday Season for 45,000 Individuals

To achieve our goal of granting 45,000 wishes this holiday season, we rely on the generosity of donors like you. 100% of your contribution will directly support:

- **Fulfilling personalized wishes:** Bringing joy and hope to individuals through thoughtful gifts.
- **Purchasing essential items:** Warm coats, blankets, school supplies, and other necessities for those in need.
- **Expanding our programs:** Reaching more people and addressing emerging needs in the community.

We are committed to transparency and accountability. We always provide regular updates on how your donation is making a difference, sharing stories of impact and demonstrating the tangible results of your generosity.

Every dollar you donate directly supports our mission of bringing joy and essential resources to those in need. Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Monetary Giving:** Donate online at give.familygivingtree.org/HWD2024
- **Lead a Drive:** Become a Drive Leader and use your personalized Virtual Giving Tree (VGT) to invite others to "shop" for items at below retail prices. Learn more at <https://familygivingtree.org/get-involved>
- **Donate Physical Items:** View the most needed gifts of 2024 at <https://familygivingtree.org/images/resources/HWD/2024/Most%20Needed%20Gifts%202024.pdf>

Family Giving Tree employs a multi-faceted fundraising strategy including individual giving, grants, corporate partnerships, securing sponsorships, volunteer matching, and collecting in-kind donations from local businesses large and small.

Join us in creating a brighter holiday season for all. Your gift, no matter the size, will make a tangible difference in the lives of your neighbors in need. Together, we can build a stronger, more compassionate community where everyone feels valued and seen.

Family Giving Tree

Leadership

Jill Mitsch
Chief Executive Officer

Jennifer Cullenbine
Founder and Director
of Transition and Donor
Development

Jess Gutierrez
Chief Financial Officer

Angela Mazza
Director of Development

Charlotte Wood
Director of Marketing and
Communications

Staff

Ashley Jacques Vestri
Agency Coordinator

Brianna Williams
Development Officer

Carmen Talavera
Programs Team Manager

Celeste Delamore
Lead Agency Coordinator

Doug Harney
Facilities/Trucking

Eddie Gutierrez
Community Drive
Coordinator

Evelyn Huynh
Partner Relations Manager

Kim Foster
Development Associate

Kristina Afzal
IT Manager

Lisa Hiatt
Drive Logistics Coordinator

Liza Levin
Sr. Administrative Assistant

Margarita Galindo
Institutional Giving Officer

Michael J Smith
Marketing Coordinator

PinnPinn Sha
Content Creator &
Coordinator

Shannon Fey
Volunteer Coordinator

Tennille Frye
Bookkeeper & Payroll
Specialist

Board of Directors

Andrea Borch, Board Chair

Dominic Mills

Sachi Patel

Shelene Huey-Booker

Malcolm Humphrey

John Mansperger

Joelle Hurlston

Lee Du

Joanne Peters

David Proulx

Brenda Swiney



Family Giving Tree
Sobrato Center for Nonprofits
606 Valley Way
Milpitas, CA 95035

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