



THE PETTENGILL HOUSE, INC.

Children & Family Services

February 12, 2015

To the Editor:

On behalf of Deborah Smith, Executive Director, as well as staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Board and clients, I would like to thank the community, schools, towns, donors and our volunteers for the outpouring of support we received over the holidays and throughout the winter. Each season brings its challenges to clients needing our support, but holidays and wintry conditions can be challenging for everyone. The stormy weather reminds me how well we all work together to fair these stressful months. Each time there is a need to be addressed; the community holds out its hand and lifts us up.

Since our winter coat drive, we've been busier than ever. Volunteers helped distribute 215 Thanksgiving Baskets to 472 clients, with staff delivering pre-cooked meals donated by Shaw's, to our elder shut-ins the day before Thanksgiving. All of the local businesses, organizations, individuals and schools who donated turkeys made this possible. Several schools got children involved to decorate boxes and stuff them with entire Thanksgiving meals. Local businesses, organizations, groups and individuals donated turkeys, complete meals with trimmings and organized food drives. I wish I could list every business, every child, and every group that donated but the list is long as you can tell from the number of baskets we distributed! Please know that clients were very grateful and full of praise for your generosity.

Over the month of December, The Pettengill House supported the holiday programs in each town and was able to deliver toys to those programs as they were dropped off at our agency. In order to provide assistance to families with children that missed sign-up deadlines or had children who aged out of qualifying for programs, we asked for gift card donations to ensure that all age groups, infants through teens, received a gift. Thank you to those who answered that call! Gift cards were distributed for 77 children. I would like to extend a special thank you to all the generous donors who assisted us with this mission.

Although we don't have a formal Christmas/Holiday Basket Program, we wanted to make sure clients had a special dinner. We asked for donations of hams to give out during our pantry and thanks to you all, we got them! One school group donated 28 ham dinners in boxes decorated with wrapping paper, while many groups and individuals donated money to buy hams or dropped them off. Holiday Hams are a rare treat. One client broke down crying when I handed her a large spiral ham. She was expecting a small canned ham and could not believe that there were people in the community who cared this much.

Throughout the holidays and beyond, we accepted many food drives. I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the countless people, organizations, businesses, schools and churches who organized food drives and donated food to our pantry, or offered incentives to customers to donate. I was struck by all the efforts many groups, teachers and individuals took to collect and deliver food. We are a small non-profit. We don't have a delivery or pick-up truck. We don't have staff that can run out and pick up food. It is here where the community meets our greatest gap. We are

grateful for the time, energy and thought you put into that task, from sorting food and checking expiration dates, to shopping for new products, to taking the time to plan, deliver and unload food donations. Thank you also to the local farms that worked with Pettengill House volunteers to rescue and donate end of season produce for our pantry.

I have to highlight the team of dedicated volunteers who helped us over the holidays, as well as those who unload our food deliveries twice a month, and work in our weekly food pantry. Many of these volunteers overlap and help us all year round. Because of their commitment, we are able to serve more than 3,000 clients annually. Thank you: Annette Barry, Christine Bourassa, Betty Breau, Lisa Brodeur, Pam Brown, Peg Brown, The Budzyna Family, Lisa Buccos, Tricia Buckley, Deb Casey, Maria Chanin, Kathleen Cousminer, Jan Cowan, Devin Cowhig, Sieglinde Aigner Crooks, Cole Cross, Janice Epps, Amy Estabrook, Sue Griffith, Noreen and Wally Hager, Maureen Haley, Lea Healey, Evey St. Hilaire, Andrea Imlach, Linda LaBrecque, Kerstin and Julia LaMontagne, Gene Landis, Dave Mackie, Renee McGuirk and family, Jean Mercer, Cara Mitchell, Wendy Morin, Mary Morrissey, Kristin Nelson and family, Karin Parker, Karen Provost, Elizabeth Richard, Mike Rowan, Donna Scott, Kelly Seyler, Patty Smyrski, Marie Spaulding, Betty Stone, Sue Sweet, Michelle Walsh, Kelly Wilcox, Michiel Van de Visser and especially Ray Webster who keeps our pantry organized, hauled turkeys and let us borrow tarps, his truck and whatever else we needed.

Lastly, a personal thank you to my Pettengill co-workers who work with great compassion and wear many hats to get the job done: Case Managers Megan Hoyt, Tara Clifford, Laurie Wile, Ann Champagne, Lisa Prendergast, Office Manager Heidi Fournier, Office Assistant Marty Ferry, Bookkeeper Lauri Scally, Assistant Director Tiffany Nigro and Executive Director Deb Smith.

It is truly hard to acknowledge and thank each and every person who contributed, and continues to contribute, to the mission of the Pettengill House. We thank you all for your ongoing support!

Julie Havey, Program and Volunteer Coordinator