

## A Note from Jane

### The True Meaning of Christmas

Who among us doesn't have wonderful memories of Christmases past...perhaps our fondest memory of waking up and finding that Santa had, indeed, brought that treasured gift you had been wishing so hard for! Perhaps it's memories of going to church services and then having a traditional meal with your family while candles twinkled and your Christmas tree glittered. Perhaps your memory is of that handmade clay bowl you made your mother and her reaction to it (which she treated like it was a Picasso and which she still displays proudly 25 years later!). Perhaps it's your first Christmas with your wife, your husband, or the morning you saw joy in your children's faces.

All of us, no doubt, have a memory or two that comes to mind every year which we treasure, and that reminds us of why our Christmas memories and traditions are so special...and why they have meaning, no matter how much stores try to get us to think of Christmas as an endless merchandising event!

The Foundation, through your generosity, is working hard to help those in need at Christmas. We just broke all records for our Thanksgiving sharing, and we will do the same at Christmas. As is our custom, we are buying individual gifts for each family at Leland House; we're donating \$4000 to buy Christmas gifts for the Outreach Christmas Store; we'll be providing gift cards to Milton Township Food Pantry and DuPage Pads.

**NEW THIS YEAR!** See our Foundation Giving Tree in the 5th floor lobby. You can take a tag and buy a gift that will be donated to Family Shelter Services. The Foundation Torch is shining brightly over many initiatives this Christmas and we intend to continue to grow our sharing, thanks to your generosity!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Officers of the FT Cares Foundation, I wish you and your families a very merry and blessed Christmas.

*Jane*

# HOLIDAY EDITION

## Thanksgiving 2014

*"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."*

*President John F. Kennedy spoke these words, and they are the perfect expression of not only what Thanksgiving is about, but also how the mission of the Foundation is lived every day.*

*In November, we broke every previous record for Thanksgiving generosity: we gave more turkeys, more Thanksgiving baskets, more gift cards, more food and cash donations than in any previous year! Of course it's not about setting records...it's about making a difference in the lives of others, and through you, we ARE living our mission!*



This November, FT and Bondwave employees worked together to provide Thanksgiving baskets (including a gift card to purchase a turkey and other perishables) to several organizations:

- Milton Township Food Pantry
- Jubilee Village
- Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans
- Tri City Family Services

Altogether, 46 baskets were distributed to deserving families in our surrounding communities!

### Milton Township Food Pantry

The Milton Township Board is involved in many community services including senior programs, a youth committee, and the largest Community Emergency Response Team in Illinois. It also runs a food pantry in Wheaton that serves over 400 people a month. This year we gave 45 turkeys for families the pantry serves.



### Jubilee Village

Jubilee Village is a transitional home in Carol Stream (affiliated with Outreach Community Ministries) that provides care to single, formerly homeless mothers between the ages of 18 and 24 and their children. Many of these young women come from backgrounds of domestic violence and have very limited financial resources. Each mother received one of our Thanksgiving baskets.



### Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans

Founded by a Vietnam War veteran, this organization provides transitional and affordable housing programs and supportive services to U.S. Veterans. The house received four baskets to share.

### Tri-City Family Services

Located in Geneva, Tri-City provides counseling and other mental health services for teens and their families. The organization is dedicated to building community through its several programs that promote sound mental health and effective family functioning. Tri-City received Thanksgiving baskets to share with the families it serves.

## Lisa's Corner:



The most important thing you can do at the holidays is to take a moment each day to simply enjoy this time of year with your kids. Let the craziness fall away and remember that the true gifts we receive are the times spent with those we love. Here are a few suggestions to help you make the most of that time.

**Read aloud.** Relive your childhood by reading the holiday classics with your kids. If they aren't already on your bookshelf, head to the library to find *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, *Snowmen at Christmas*, *The Polar Express* and of course, *The Night Before Christmas*. Have everyone in the family, young and old alike, take turns reading aloud.

**Camp out indoors.** Start a new tradition by spending one night sleeping on the living room floor under (or around) the Christmas tree. Put on the holiday music, make s'mores and enjoy the beautiful lights that twinkle like stars.

**Feed the hungry – animals!** Celebrate the importance of the manger animals on Christmas Eve by leaving treats out for the neighborhood wildlife to give thanks during a time when food is scarce. Fill a bird feeder, set out a salt lick for deer or leave out peanut butter bread for the squirrels.

**See the lights.** If you are up for an adventure, pack everyone into the car with a few snacks and head downtown to see the lights along Michigan Avenue and the widows on State Street. Want to stay a little closer to home? Mooseheart has one of Chicagoland's largest light displays (over 1.5 miles!) and is open nightly from 5-9 p.m. November 28–December 31.

**Take a break.** Set aside one night each week in December before Christmas to watch a holiday movie or television special. Pop some popcorn, make hot chocolate and sit together to watch classics like *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *A Christmas Story* or even *Elf*!

## SHOPPING SPREE FOR TOTS!



Barb Reese (First Trust, Fund Accounting) shares a family tradition of generosity:

*My family has always enjoyed donating to the annual Toys for Tots drive sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps. For the past couple of years I have been purchasing Toys "R" Us gift cards throughout the year whenever I have a little extra cash and then I stash them away in a drawer. As the holidays approach, I set a date with my daughters Allison and Amanda to go shopping. We go to our local Toys "R" Us store and purchase toys with the gift cards that we donate directly to Toys For Tots. The girls and I have so much fun picking out gifts; it has become a family tradition that we all look forward to and enjoy so much!*

**Giving doesn't have to be complicated, and being mindful year-round of the needs around us cultivates a culture of generosity within our families and communities. How will you help inspire the people around you this season? Send your stories to [lweier@ftportfolios.com](mailto:lweier@ftportfolios.com).**

## Merry Christmas to All!

**Board of Directors:**  
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