

# Press Release

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## **LINK Sets Record Registration of People in Need For Christmas Food and Toy Basket Programs on 20 December in Sterling and Herndon, Virginia**

LINK volunteers have received applications, via phone, fax and mail, from 425 families requesting groceries and toys during the annual Christmas Food and Toy Basket Programs to be held on Saturday, 20 December at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church (groceries) in Sterling and Herndon United Methodist Church (toys). The 425 families, comprising 1988 men, women and children, are the largest number of applications ever recorded in the 19 year holiday program history. LINK is interdenominational, consisting of Baptist, Brethren, and Catholic, Episcopal, Fellowship, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

Because each family selects their own groceries from a mini-supermarket inside the church (families are scheduled to arrive in groups at 15 minute intervals), LINK officials determined that no more than 425 families could realistically complete their selections during the nine-hour period of operation and are now at maximum capacity. During the Thanksgiving Program on 22 November, 378 families registered and 314 families actually participated and received groceries and winter coats and sweaters.

During the entire 2003 year, LINK will provide services to nearly 6,000 people, employing only volunteers and with an annual budget of under \$70,000.00. LINK can do this because of the fantastic support we receive from Loudoun and Fairfax area Scouting for Food organizations, and Herndon, Great Falls, Sterling, Potomac Falls, South Riding, and Ashburn schools in soliciting and collecting the donated food and gift certificates to support this effort. May God continue to bless our great community.

Everyone is invited to volunteer (8 AM to 5 PM) and please ask your peers to come out and participate in this very emotional and gratifying **Christmas** event experience.

Volunteers are needed to assist each family in selecting their 5-day allotment of food items and ensuring that they receive a grocery certificate. Volunteers are also needed to restock shelves and load food into family vehicles. LINK especially needs people who can give an hour or two to volunteer as foreign language interpreters.

Volunteers can register by calling the LINK Hot Line @ 703-437-1776. Check donations may be made payable to LINK and sent to P.O. Box 443, Sterling, VA 20167.

Donations are tax-deductible. Food certificates from area grocery stores are also welcome. LINK's Campaign Identification Number is 8442.