

Family Living

The Portland Observer

Adopt A Family And Brighten A Holiday

Thanks to St. Vincent de Paul, 105 needy families in the Portland metropolitan area were "adopted" last Christmas. For those families, being adopted meant that an otherwise dreary holiday season was a lot brighter. Each received not only a festive meal but staples enough to stock the cupboard, along with warm clothing and toys for the kids in the family.

"I don't care what your politics are," says Mark Mathews. "When there are children involved, it's tough to see families without the things we take for granted -- heat, food, clothing -- basic needs not being met."

Mark Mathews is a vice president and partner at Northwest Pump and Equipment, 2800 N. W. 31st Avenue in Portland. The company, which has 55 employees in Portland, also has office in Seattle and Spokane, Washington, and in Billings, Montana. Northwest Pump and Equipment has adopted several families every year for the past 22 years.

Northwest Pump and Equipment adopts its families through Immaculate Heart Parish St. Vincent de Paul in north Portland, where Mathews got involved in a tutoring program when he was a student at Central Catholic High School.

The company provides the cash for two weeks worth of groceries, a turkey and a ham and employees purchase toys and clothing for their family. They spend about \$800 for groceries for the three families, designating a couple of employees as shoppers, others to wrap gifts. Last year, employees contributed nearly \$2,000 for toys and clothing.

Mathews says There's a lot of competition among employees to get to deliver the groceries and gifts. "Everyone wants to go. It's the high point of the holidays for us all," he says. "We try to give as many employees as possible a chance to participate."

According to St. Vincent de Paul's executive director Janice Pelster, in addition to the 105 families who were adopted last year, an additional 76 on the list weren't matched with sponsors. She expects at least as many families to need help this year but hopes each will be matched with a sponsor.

Individuals or businesses who want to sponsor a family may call 234-5295. Anyone who needs help may call 232-9797.

In addition to its Adopt-A-Family program, the Portland Society of St. Vincent de Paul sponsors one of the largest door to door Christmas food drives in the country, expecting to serve about 5,000 families this year.

Volunteers and contributions are welcome, says Pelster.

St. Vincent De Paul's Christmas Shopping List Totals Tons

Forty thousand pounds each of oranges, potatoes, apples and onions, 7,500 loaves of bread, 6,000 pounds of ham, 5,000 pounds of margarine.

That's just the beginning when Janice Pelster makes up her holiday grocery list. Pelster, who is the executive director of the Portland Society of St. Vincent de Paul, masterminds one of the biggest holiday food programs in the U.S. With the help of 2,000 volunteers and generous contributions of food and cash, St. Vincent de Paul will feed about 5,000 needy families again this holiday season.

Volunteers will pick up non-perishable food door to door in metropolitan neighborhoods Saturday, December 9. This canned and packaged food will supplement the fresh produce and meat purchased by St. Vincent de Paul to create substantial food baskets averaging 60 pounds apiece. The goal, according to Pelster, is to provide "all of the fixings for a holiday dinner -- and a few of the extras that make the meal special."

St. Vincent de Paul needs to collect about 350,000 pounds of food to ensure ample holiday dinners for 5,000 families.

Volunteers are needed to collect, sort and package food and to staff the telephones for families who need help. If you can help, call St. Vincent de Paul at 234-5295 or 234-1114. If you need help, call 232-9797.



For this team of toy testers, work is all fun and games, as they figure out which of 24 new toys is their favorite in the 8th annual Duracell Kids' Choice National Toy Survey. Results are available by calling Duracell's toll-free hotline, 1-800-BEST TOYS.

Kenton Home Preparedness Fair

Again recent news articles have sounded the alert: Geologists expect a major earthquake in our future. Are your home and family ready for such a disaster? And what about other dangers, such as wide-spread damage from another Columbus Day storm? Or release of hazardous materials by a rail or highway accident? Or criminal breaking and entry? Or any of the smaller catastrophes that can befall your home? How does one prepare for such events? When fire and police personnel are busy with the really BIG problems, who will help the rest of the community? For the answer to these and similar questions, come to the Kenton Home Preparedness Fair at the Kenton Fire House, 8105 N. Brandon, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Saturday, December 2.

Portland residents must be ready for more than just earthquakes. There will be demonstrations, information, and handouts for your family on home security, fire safety, first aid, natural disasters, earthquake proofing, and other emergencies. Displays will feature fire trucks, safety equipment, seismic retrofit systems, home preparedness kits and much more. The Kenton Network Emergency Team will demonstrate how citizens can play an important part when disaster strikes. The Portland Police Bureau will show how low income, elderly and disabled citizens can get free assistance with home security. A North Portland Neighborhood Crime Prevention Specialist will share information on home security surveys and how other factors can make your home attractive to a criminal. And more!

Presented by the Kenton Action Plan with the assistance of the Kenton Neighborhood Emergency Team, Portland Fire Bureau, Portland Police Bureau, and the North Portland Neighborhood Office. For more information call 289-6693. The Kenton Action Plan is a community redevelopment effort funded through the Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Walnut Park Retail Center has joined forces with the Albina Ministerial Alliance to provide help to homeless families in northeast Portland.

Through the month of December, all merchants at Walnut Park Retail Center will provide collection points for "Neighbors Helping Neighbors", a program to provide homeless or formerly homeless families with holiday essentials. Items requested include: New and used clothing for adults and children, especially winter clothing; unopened personal care products, such as soaps, hair, dental and skin products; new or used household items, such as bed linen, kitchenware and towels; new educational toys. All donated items will benefit homeless members of NE Portland through the Albina Ministerial Alliance.

The Albina Ministerial Alliance has promoted the health and well-being of children and families in north and northeast Portland for over 40 years. The Alliance's social programs serve over 7,000 people each year.

For more information about the Albina Ministerial Alliance or Neighbors Helping Neighbors, please call 285-0493 ext. 203 Walnut Park Retail Center is at NE Killingsworth Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Homeownership Opportunity Forum

A Homeownership Opportunity Forum is to be held on Saturday, December 9, 1995 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 NE Knott - Room A. Refreshments Provided RSVP to 282-7744.

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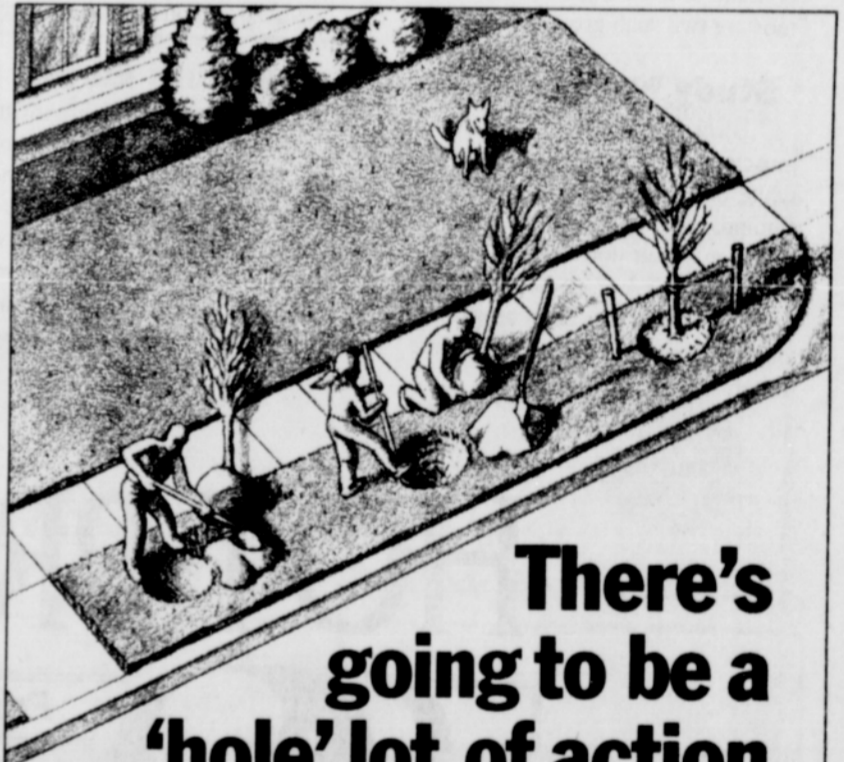
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There's going to be a 'hole' lot of action on Alberta Street.

Fifty good size holes to be exact. That's how many trees are going to be planted by neighborhood volunteers starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, December 9.

Pacific Power & Friends of Trees have teamed up to sponsor a "GreenStreet" tree planting. It's part of a day-long celebration of the Alberta Street Renaissance.



You're Invited

The morning begins with tree planting (meet at the Albina Community Bank, 1130 NE Alberta). Then, from noon 'til 7 p.m. a Community Expo unfolds at the Texas Annex, 1625 NE Alberta featuring live blues & jazz, food and informational booths.

A Community Effort

This special day for Alberta Street is supported by Concordia Neighborhood Association; King Neighborhood Association, OAME, Sabin Community Development Corporation, House of Umoja and Vernon Neighborhood Association.

GreenStreet: For the Neighborhood

Pacific Power's GreenStreet program is designed to give commercial streets in Northeast Portland both an economic and environmental boost. The expertise of Friends of Trees ensures a successful planting. We hope you can attend.

To volunteer call 282-8846.



PACIFIC POWER THE RIGHT KIND OF ENERGY