

# A Tradition of Giving

continued **▲** from front

out holiday gift bags to other volunteers at the event, Jackson pointed across the room to a smiling elderly man, who seemed to know everyone in the room.

"He was in charge of the program when I was a little girl in Kindergarten," she said. "He brought food to my family."

Jackson said she remembers saying to her mom that night, "I want to help someday."

"And after all those years, I came back and volunteered," she said. "I feel blessed."

Bud Lewis, who celebrated his 91st birthday this year, has been helping feed families through the organization for decades.

"I've been here every year since I became the Commander of the Sunshine Division in 1963," he said.

Although now retired from the Police Bureau, he shows up every season to support the division,

which he said has changed so much over the years.

"I remember when we used to cut up the beef quarters for families every year," he said. "Now it is automated."

Back in his time, he said the majority of workers were jail trustees, previously or currently incarcerated individuals looking for a way to give back to the community. Now, however, local residents show up to give back to the neighborhoods they live in.

Although times have changed, Lewis said the mission of the division remains the same.

"It started with the Portland police who wanted to help people," he said. "And the amazing thing is it is a homegrown organization. That is what's nice."

Don Lee, who has also been volunteering with the organization for over three decades, agreed.

This holiday season marks the second year that retired state em-



PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volunteers for the non-profit Sunshine Division gather at a north Portland warehouse to prepare boxes of food for the holiday season, which will feed more than 3,500 families in time for Christmas.

ployee manager Jerry Fugere volunteered.

"The people here are giving back to the community to get food out for Christmas to the folks who need it—

and there are a lot of folks who need it," he said.

Kyle Camberg, the executive director of the Sunshine Division, said every food box will contain a sparkling cider, four cans of vegetables, fresh potatoes, oranges, onions, pears and carrots, a desert mix and stuffing in their boxes.

"When you add all of that up, it's right around a 40-pound box," he said. "And on Saturday, before the volunteers deliver the boxes, we add a chicken."

More than a dozen local non-profits and the Portland Police Bureau precincts also join in to make the deliveries successful.

Camberg said the non-profit agency works year-round through a variety of programs to ensure families receive their basic needs.

"Hunger isn't seasonal," he said. "The work that we do will not slow down in the coming months."

According to Camberg, one in two Americans are at or below the poverty line, and the need for food services is at an all time high.

Police officers also have the ability to deliver a food box, which makes the Portland program unique.

"No one else does that," Camberg said.

The Sunshine Division has re-

ceived 1.8 million pounds of food donations for Portlanders in need this year.

"A little over a thousand families each month will visit and receive services from us," Camberg said. "They go grocery shopping in our store."

The organization also provides a clothing room. In 2011, the group secured an estimated 20 thousand pounds of donated clothing.

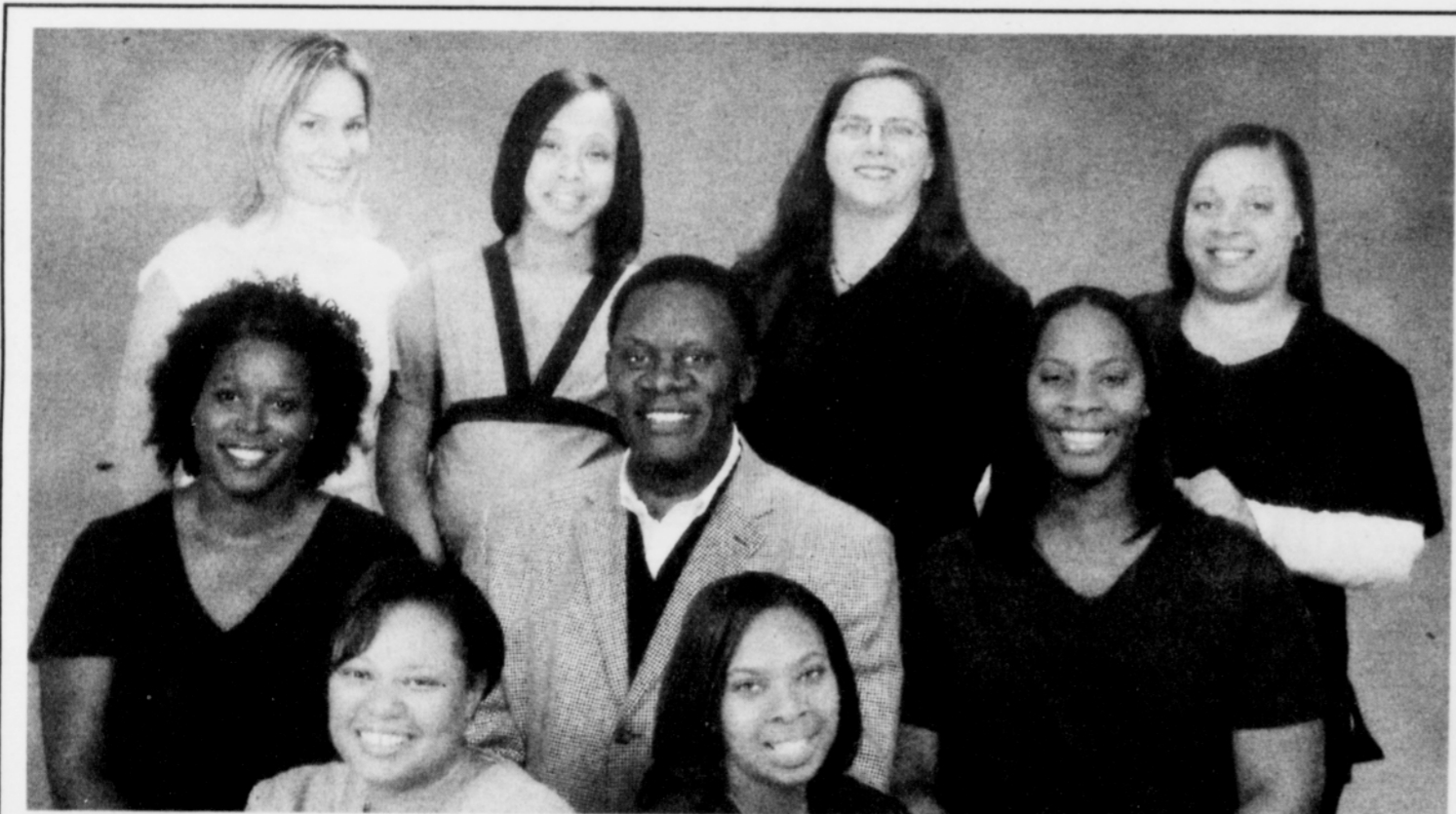
Although he works year round to help provide assistance to families, Sunshine Division Operations Manager Phil Kent said last week's 'pack night' is traditionally the biggest volunteer effort they make all year.

"We see people from every walk of life come in and pack boxes," Kent said. "Sometimes they are here because Sunshine helped them. We have church groups, teams, or just people who do it every year."

56-year-old Erik Jensen, who has been a volunteer with the non-profit for eight-years, agreed.

"It's a great atmosphere, working with all these people," he said. "And it seems like every year the need becomes greater."

For more information about the Sunshine Division or how to become involved, visit [sunshinedivision.org](http://sunshinedivision.org).



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

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