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ABC members helping kids for the holidays at Louie's Place

November 13, 2014 - Rhode Island

For the third year in a row, members of Associated Builders & Contractors of Rhode Island will be donating money to buy coats, clothes, shoes and socks for children at Louie's Place. Run by the South Providence Neighborhood Ministries, Louie's Place teaches children life skills and enrichment courses adding to their self-esteem and chances for success in life.

Three years ago, ABC member Tom Furey of Furey Roofing and Construction, Inc. made the ABC board of directors aware of Louie's Place and the fact that many of the children lacked adequate clothing for the wintertime. Some lacked proper coats, and some even had shoes and socks in such poor condition, they desperately needed replacing. Lynn Kent of Robert F. Audet, Inc., an ABC member electrical contractor spearheaded a drive among the board members to purchase new winter coats, shoes, socks, mittens and scarves for the children at Louie's Place. That year, nearly \$1,800 was raised and no child went to school in clothing that lacked adequate warmth.

Each year at its holiday party, ABC asks members to bring in unwrapped toys and/or non-perishable food items for the food pantry. Until a few years ago, the toys were simply dropped into Toys for Tots boxes at the nearest bank. Shortly after moving to its new headquarters in Pawtucket, the ABC staff noticed carts full of toys being wheeled down the hall to the offices of Gateway Mental Health Services. Upon inquiring what the toys were for, they learned that Gateway collects toys for the children of their adult patients...hundreds of toys. It sounded like a perfect match, so rather than dumping the toys collected at the ABC party into a box at a bank, ABC donated them to Gateway.

Every Thursday afternoon, Kristen Brescia, director of training at ABC's apprenticeship school, the RI Construction Training Academy, leaves the office to volunteer at a local Food Pantry. She simply refers to it as her little way of giving back. The food items collected at the ABC Holiday Party, each December, are loaded into the back of Kristen's SUV for delivery to the Food Pantry at which she volunteers.

Upon contacting Louie's Place, this year, Lynn Kent, who will be the 2015 chair of the Associated Builders and Contractors board of directors discovered that the need for warm clothing is great, again, this winter. So, 26 new coats and many pairs of shoes, socks, mittens and scarves have been donated, and contributions to pay for them are flowing in from ABC members.

The holidays are a time for giving. Between the toys going to Gateway, the warm coats and clothing going to Louie's Place, and the food items going to the food pantry, the spirit of giving is alive and well at Associated Builders and Contractors of Rhode Island. Our association exists for the purpose of helping its members win work; and to help them deliver that work safely, ethically and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which ABC and its members do business. Through the generosity of those members, kids will be warmer, more will have toys for Christmas, and the food pantry will be better stocked. For more information about helping the kids or to join ABC, send an email torobert@abc-ri.org.

