



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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Pipefitters Union holiday charity drive provides food and toys for Boston

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Shown (from left) are: Local 537 business manager Tom Kerr; Santa Claus; Marine vet and inside guard Danny O'Brien; and organizer Chris Brennan with toy donations.

Boston, MA Pipefitters Local 537, one of Boston's largest unions, held a charitable drive at their Union Hall to collect donations to aid struggling community members this holiday season. The initiative comes at a time when thousands of families are facing food and financial insecurity with the impact of COVID-19.

"This has been a challenging year for many working families, and it can be even harder during the holidays," said Pipefitters Local 537 business manager/financial secretary-treasurer Tom Kerr. "Giving a bag of groceries or a brand-new toy to a child this holiday season is the least we can do for our neighbors."

Local 537 collected an estimated \$20,000 of brand-new toys for Marine Toys for Tots, including Lego sets, games, dolls, and sports equipment, in addition to hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items for Catholic Charities Food Pantry in Dorchester.

"I'm blown away by the donations and kindness shown by our fellow members this weekend," said Local 537 organizer and Toys for Tots coordinator Chris Brennan, whose one son is an Air Force veteran and the other is currently serving in the U.S. Navy. "As parents, we always want our kids, and every kid, to have a great, fun holiday." Brennan, Marine veteran and Local 537 inside guard Danny O'Brien, and a team of union members worked as Santa's helpers, coordinating with Toys for Tots to distribute the toy donations.

Dorchester, East Boston, and Hyde Park have some of the city's highest rates of COVID-19. The severe economic impact of the pandemic has left many families without the income they depend on to pay daily living expenses. As food bank visits remain at an all-time high, Massachusetts has the highest percentage of residents facing hunger in the country, nearly one million people.

Throughout the pandemic, Local 537 has been working to help local communities. Its Charitable Foundation donated \$20,000 to the Greater Boston Food Bank ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday, which provided 60,000 nutritious meals to at-risk residents across the Commonwealth. The Union also donated much-needed PPE (gloves, goggles and face shields) to Quincy's Manet Community Health Care Center.

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