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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Metrocrest Services Opens Holiday Store to**

**Help North Texans in Need**

*Seniors among hardest-hit Texans in year that has seen more in need than height of pandemic*

CARROLLTON/ADDISON/FARMERS BRANCH/COPPELL (December 4, 2023) – For many North Texans in need, just trying to keep up with rising rent and electrical costs have them making difficult choices between necessities like food and medication. Celebrating the holiday season is often just not possible, and the season can feel anything but bright.

With the help of the community, Metrocrest Services is helping to bring holiday magic to North Texans in need through the Metrocrest Services Holiday Store. The non-profit social services agency provides wrap-around services year-round – meaning it helps clients with the many aspects of getting on the road to independence, including providing assistance with food, rent, job skills, financial education and much more. But this holiday season finds the trained professionals of Metrocrest Services in an entirely different role: That of elves.

“Our holiday store helps wishes come true for local families,” Caitlin Hardegree, marketing and communications director of Metrocrest Services, said. “While parents and grandparents often have to make hard decisions about how to pull their family through, what they really want is for the young ones to be able to make the kind of holiday memories any child holds dear. Through the generosity of the community and the work of our dedicated volunteers, this holiday store helps make that dream come true, at no cost to our clients.”

Metrocrest Services opens its holiday store to invited clientele December 9-20. Clients can look around and shop, often with the help of a volunteer, with no money exchanged. Because they have the opportunity to select gifts themselves, clients also receive the dignity of being able to shop as any of us would for those we love. This special initiative will serve more than 2,500 children and seniors this year with new gifts generously provided by donations to Metrocrest Services. There is an ongoing need for toys and other items to stock the store, and the community is invited to be involved in helping to stock it. Metrocrest Services maintains a [wishlist of items](https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/1UO8JG4TS7RO6) to help ensure the store stays stocked.

**Seniors Hit Hard**

Among the hardest hit this year are North Texas seniors.

Living on a fixed income is particularly challenging when inflation continues to make the cost of necessities such as housing, food, utilities, medication, transportation and more skyrocket to levels that are pinching everyone, but bruising our most vulnerable senior citizens. In fact, Metrocrest Services has seen a 54 percent increase in seniors requesting financial education services this year as they look to stretch every dollar to its max. They’re also trying to get jobs in their golden years, creating a 35 percent increase in seniors requesting workforce development services from Metrocrest Services.

“Seniors are doing what they can, but are still having to make some hard choices. It’s difficult to hear them say they are choosing between things like food or medicine,” Hardegree said. “In addition to helping them with their most basic needs, we have a senior gifting program that allows our community to help make their holidays a little brighter, too. It’s tragic when seniors are forgotten during the holidays, and we don’t want that to happen.”

Through Metrocrest Services’ seniors program, community members are creating special gift baskets full of essential food, household items and gifts for Metrocrest-area seniors in need. There is still time to donate and provide the items that seniors need this holiday season and year-round by visiting metrocrestservices.org/donate-today/ and selecting “Senior Holiday Gifts” in the drop-down. Or, items can be purchased for seniors from the Metrocrest Services [seniors’ wishlist](https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/153CDN51UBX1M).

**Inflation Harder for Most Vulnerable**

This year, the number of people walking through the doors of Metrocrest Services to request assistance has doubled from 2022. And, in the last four months, the non-profit has seen a 50 percent increase in new pantry clients – people who have never asked for help from Metrocrest Services before – over the same timeframe last year.

Texas has the second highest rate of food insecurity in the nation, and food banks are warning that the challenges could soon get worse. Today, about 3.3 million Texans receive federal food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including many older Texans: From January of 2020 to October 2023, there was a 28% increase in the number of Texans age 65 and older receiving SNAP benefits. In October, the average Texan receiving SNAP benefits got $174.45 — about $5.80 per day. SNAP levels have not increased since 2018 and have in no way kept up with inflation. And, as housing costs rose dramatically during the pandemic and afterward, many impacted families cut back on food costs.

**North Texans Needed to Help**

Through its wrap-around services, Metrocrest Services is well-positioned to help area residents in need – but this year, more than ever, the non-profit needs the help of the community.

How to help? Go to <https://metrocrestservices.org/donate/> to learn about how easy it is to give, or purchase items from the non-profit’s [Amazon Wish List](https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/1UO8JG4TS7RO6) to help Metrocrest Services with our community's needs. There are particular needs for gifts for children 11 to 18 years old, and for seniors.

Will it be a happy Christmas for all? North Texans, your help is needed!

**Metrocrest Services, Inc.**, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to providing programs for individuals, families and seniors that lead to self-sufficiency and foster independence. Programs include rent and utility bill assistance, financial and budgeting assistance, food pantry, employment coaching and transportation, minor home repairs and home-delivered meals to benefit seniors. Additionally, Metrocrest provides programs focused on children including holiday gifts and summer food. For more information, visit www.metrocrestservices.org.

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