

Food bank in 'really good shape now'

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CIRCLEVILLE — The Emergency Clearinghouse Food Pantry, a beacon of hope all year round to those in need, received a Christmas gift of its own from the community.

Pickaway County citizens found the time from their busy pre-holiday rush to donate cash and food items to the Emergency Clearinghouse Food Pantry to make certain their neighbors will have something to eat, and they donated cash and toys to local Toys for Tots program to make Christmas gifts available to youngsters in less fortunate families.

Local churches, which claim to be “the reason for the season,” took over the giving tradition Sunday with spectacular choral and musical performances on the last Sunday of Christian Advent.

“We’re in really good shape now,” said Mary Easter, director of the Emergency Clearing House food pantry which received food and monetary donations collected Saturday by the four churches on Mound Street. “The pantry provides emergency food and assistance with medical prescriptions.”

It is sponsored by the churches of Pickaway County and Pickaway County United Way, and administered by the Pickaway County Community Action Agency, which also administers Toys for Tots.

The donations were collected Saturday morning at a joint food drive by St. Joseph Church, St. Philips

Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, and Trinity Lutheran Church.

The donated food items were delivered to the Food Pantry Saturday afternoon, and were immediately placed on pantry shelves in the storeroom for distribution by the Clearinghouse staff, board members, and volunteers.

That was not all the good news about giving last weekend.

More than \$585 in toys and monetary donations to benefit the Toys for Tots program in Pickaway County was collected Saturday evening at the Third annual Downtown Old Fashioned Christmas.

The event is organized and directed by the Roundtown Relayers, a 6-member group of citizens.

“We want the Christmas season to be a blessing for everyone, and believe helping the Toys for Tots program is the best approach,” said Joyce Graul, a member.

Toys for Tots, another program administered by PICCA, assists low-income families of Pickaway County with Christmas for their children ages 1 to 14 years.

“It was a fun night for a very worthwhile cause even though we had to battle the cold weather,” said Sandy Jordan, another member.

Evening events included the singing of Christmas carols by choirs from several churches, music by the Pickaway Brass, entertainment including face painting of youngsters by Chick-e-doodle, an opportunity to talk with Santa and Mrs. Claus, carriage rides by Max Spangler, and the placement of luminaries to honor and memorialize local citizens.

Headquarters was an office on Main Street donated for the evening by Tami Clark of Clark and Associates, Robert Johnson donated the use of a Court Street office for Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, and the carriage rides originated in front of Christopher’s Boutique and were made possible by a donation from Mark Bess of Direct Mortgage.

“The luminaries lined the streets In Honor, In Prayer or In Memory of someone who is battling an

illness or lost their battle,” said Jordan. “They were for people recovering from surgery, shut-ins, or just to let someone know you are thinking about them,” she said.

Sunday was filled with Christmas music during the fourth Sunday of Advent.

The Chancel Choir of Circleville Community United Methodist Church, under the direction of Beth Latella, music director, performed its Christmas Cantata at the church’s 8:15 and 11 a.m. services Sunday.

In addition to a variety of songs, the Cantata was enhanced by performances by the Joy Bells, the church’s handbell choir, and violin solos by Esther Fouts.