December 2024

DONOR Connection

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Joy Abounds at Annual Holiday Luncheon

Gifts, treats, and special guests Santa and the Grinch elicited joyful smiles at Pittsburgh Mercy's annual holiday luncheon for our Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services (IDDS) clients. Held December 19 at Salvatore's Banquet Hall, attendees numbered over 175 guests, including individuals from both our residential and day programs.

Melissa DeiCas from St. Jude's Church delivers gifts to Brendan Copp for persons served at Pittsburgh Mercy.

Special thanks to the generous donors who sponsored the event:

- A grant from the Edith L. Trees Foundation.
- Donated gifts from St. Jude's Church (part of their Sacred Heart Giving Tree program) and several other church groups who collection a variety of items, including art kits, holiday sweaters, fleece blankets, and Pittsburgh Steelers and Pittsburgh Penguins

items.

“Getting a hand-delivered gift from Santa is so special for these individuals,” said **Stacy Fitzgerald**, Pittsburgh Mercy IDD Senior Manager. “It’s incredible how much joy it brings to them – and also to our staff who delight in being part of this fun tradition.”

Honoring the Homeless at Memorial Event

On Saturday, December 21, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net (OSN) gathered to mark **National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day** with their annual candlelight vigil to honor lives lost to homelessness. The service coincides with the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year, which also happens to be the anniversary of the Sisters of Mercy’s arrival in Pittsburgh in 1843.

OSN staff, other homeless services providers, and members of the public gathered under the ramp at the intersection of Grant Street and Fort Pitt Boulevard in downtown Pittsburgh to remember 18 individuals who died during the past year while living on the streets. Under the overpass, a wall showcases metal plaques bearing the names of individuals who have died on the streets.

The vigil included several speakers, including Dr. Todd Wahrenberger, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Chief Medical Officer, who spoke of the strong sense of community among people experiencing homelessness. “This past year, I began making house calls to those without houses,” he said. “At first, I didn’t see community. I saw brokenness. The cracks. The chaos. I felt the weight of addiction, cruelty, hunger — and the numbing that follows. Yet, the longer I stayed, the more I saw beyond the cracks. I saw hope. I saw courage. I saw resilience. I saw humor. And I saw love — the kind that binds people together in the face of unimaginable hardship.”

Danielle Schnauber Jones, a nurse practitioner and critical OSN team member, also spoke at the event. “Humans deserve love, they deserve support. We never know what the person next to us is struggling with that day or how their year has been. A lot of individuals are one traumatic event, one significant event away from homelessness.”

Pittsburgh Mercy and OSN staff have hosted the vigil since the program's founding in 1996. Visit Pittsburgh Mercy's website to learn more about homelessness in our community and our efforts to help people experiencing homelessness.

Steelers Changemaker Award

A Christmas Day Steelers game is a special event. And this year's game featured a special gift: honoring **Carolina Frantz,** MSN, RN and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Duquesne University's School of Nursing BSN-AID program, with the **Steelers' Inspire Change Changemaker Award**! The award is given annually to individuals who are making a difference in their communities through social justice work. After being surprised by outside linebacker Alex Highsmith with the award, Carolina dedicated the award to Pittsburgh Mercy. **Jody Figas**, Vice President of Development, accepted the award on behalf of Carolina and Pittsburgh Mercy, who received a check for $10,000 courtesy of the NFL Foundation and recognition at the Christmas Day Steelers game against the Kansas City Chiefs.

Thank you to everyone who gave to Pittsburgh Mercy in 2024.

If you haven't made your gift yet, it's not too late for a 2024 gift of hope! There's still time to make your end-of-year gift to Pittsburgh Mercy! Your donation can be life-changing to our neighbors in need, supporting vital programs and services such as:

- Medical and behavioral health care for those living unsheltered on the streets
- School-based and outpatient therapy for children with behavioral health needs
- Food pantry supplies for patients at Pittsburgh Mercy's Family Health Center
- Pet food and supplies for the furry companions of guests at Second Avenue Commons

Help celebrate this holiday season with a gift of hope.

Donate Now

2025 is the Year to Volunteer!

Why not make volunteering one of your New Year's resolutions? Giving of your time is a truly meaningful way to impact the lives of others. Consider these opportunities:

- Serving food at Second Avenue Commons
- Hosting a sporting event watch party at a behavioral health residential program
- Making arts and crafts at our adult day programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Sorting donated clothing and basic hygiene supplies for people experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, or other crises

For more details or to sign up, contact Pittsburgh Mercy's Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator Brendan Copp at **Brendan.Copp@pittsburghmercy.org** or 412-897-8822.

Pittsburgh Mercy sends a special thank-you to Carlow University's men's and women's soccer teams, who recently dropped by Second Avenue Commons to play bingo and do crafts with people experiencing homelessness.

Thank you, Celtics, for your kindness and compassion!

PITTSBURGH MERCY
A HERITAGE OF HOPE

Pittsburgh Mercy | 1200 Reedsdale St | Pittsburgh, PA 15233 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

Constant Contact

Try email marketing for free today!