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ST. ANDREW'S SENIOR SOLUTIONS GRANTS HOLIDAY WISHES OF HOMEBOUND AREA SENIORS THROUGH ITS GROWING ADOPT-A-SENIOR PROGRAM

Initiative provides gifts, many of them essential, to more than 40 area older adults this Christmas season

ST. LOUIS, Mo., DEC. 29, 2011 . . . St. Andrew's Senior Solutions helped to make the holidays brighter for more seniors than ever before as part of its 2011 Adopt-A-Senior initiative. Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the St. Louis community, St. Andrew's delivered special gifts to the homes of more than 40 St. Louis-area seniors during December. From hats, gloves, coats, robes and sweet treats to big ticket items like furniture, appliances and TVs, no wishes went unfulfilled, as St. Andrew's brought holiday cheer to its less-fortunate homebound clients.

"This has been a very special year for our Adopt-A-Senior program," said Ann Bannes, vice president of St. Andrew's Senior Solutions. "Last year, only a handful of our seniors were adopted, so it was incredible to see our adoption list grow so substantially this year. We were also overwhelmed to see how the community came through to purchase some very large, and much-needed items for our seniors, including a bed, a recliner, a TV and even a new stove. What we've witnessed is a true example of the holiday spirit in action."

Among the clients receiving a few of this year's big ticket items was 76-year-old Joanne Peterson whose wish for a new bed for her grandson was granted by St. Andrew's. The organization stepped in to help after hearing that Joanne's 14-year-old grandson had recently moved in with her, and was sleeping on a used mattress because there was no extra bed in Joanne's home and no funds to purchase one. Joanne was provided with not one, but two, brand new twin bed frames, along with mattresses, bedding and a matching dresser. Joanne's grandson is also enjoying a new laptop computer, courtesy of St. Andrew's. "It was overwhelming and such a blessing to receive so many wonderful gifts," said Joanne. "I've never seen my grandson smile so much. These surprises really lifted his spirits and I can't thank St. Andrew's enough."

Another recipient of one of this year's bigger ticket items was 63-year-old Nancy Rankin, who was presented with a new, free-standing stove. "My old stove went out, so I'm very grateful to St. Andrew's for giving me a new one," she noted. In addition to a new stove, Nancy also received a new robe and a set each of bath and kitchen towels. "I wasn't sure I'd even be getting any gifts at all this year, so it made me really happy that St. Andrew's visited me."

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St. Andrew's celebrates success of 2011 Adopt-A-Senior initiative

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For 70-year-old Pearl Liggins, it was the simple gift of a warm robe and matching slippers that helped brighten the holiday. In December, she'd just gotten a new thermostat for her home, but was unable to set it on her own. She says her new robe kept her warm while she waited for a family member to come and adjust the thermostat. "The robe is just so soft and so warm, and I'm so thankful to St. Andrew's for all of the gifts they gave me. I really enjoyed all of them," she noted. Along with her robe and slippers, Pearl received kitchen and bath towels, bubble bath and some mint chocolate candies, which she joked have already been eaten.

With more seniors adopted in 2011 than ever before, additional volunteers were needed to drop off gifts and spread holiday cheer. Long-time member of the St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors System's (STARSS) Friends Board, Barbara Cooper, was among those who played Santa this year, delivering gifts to the homes of four less-fortunate homebound seniors. Having adopted seniors and purchased gifts for them in the past, this was the first year Cooper volunteered to make visits to the clients' homes. She says having the chance to see their reactions first-hand was a gift in itself. "The seniors I visited were just so happy and thrilled to see us. The joy of Christmas is love, and these visits and gifts are so important because they show the seniors how loved they are, and that they are remembered during the holidays."

Cooper adds that the experience was so rewarding that she plans to make deliveries again next year. "When you live on a fixed income, there's little money left to purchase the extras. St. Andrew's Adopt-A-Senior program gives volunteers like me the chance to help seniors who can't help themselves, and it feels really good to have that opportunity."

Gifts for the 2011 Adopt-A-Senior initiative were purchased by employees of the St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors System, friends of St. Andrew's and members of the St. Louis community, with gift deliveries handled by St. Andrew's staff members and volunteers like Cooper.

"There's nothing quite like the joy of opening a special gift at Christmas, and there's nothing more touching than seeing the smiles on the faces of our seniors as they open items from their own wish lists," added Bannes. "This year's Adopt-A-Senior initiative was a huge success, and we're thrilled to have had the chance to make the holiday season brighter for so many less-fortunate homebound seniors in the St. Louis area."

To learn more about the Adopt-A-Senior holiday program, or to find out how you can help St. Andrew's support area homebound seniors year-round, contact St. Andrew's Senior Solutions at (314) 726-5766.

St. Andrew's Senior Solutions is a private, non-profit organization that is an affiliate of the St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors System. Founded in 1961, the St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors System is not-for-profit and provides housing, health, in-home care and supportive services, as well as services and assistance to the family caregivers of seniors. To learn more about St. Andrew's Senior Solutions, call (314) 726-5766 or visit www.standrewsseniorsolutions.com.