

Thanks to our many wonderful volunteers and patrons over \$15,000 was raised during the Holiday Gift Wrap season for Hospice Life Care programs. Sharon Dragon, Development Coordinator for Holyoke VNA & Hospice Life Care, managed and coordinated the entire wrapping season.

The Annual Holiday Wrap began on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving. Volunteers were busy that first day, wrapping over one hundred gifts. On Thursday, December 6th, the booth officially opened with the Light Up A Life Memorial Ceremony and Tree Lighting to remember loved ones. This event, held at the Hospice Life Care booth in the Holyoke Mall, featured local speakers and the Blessed Sacrament School Choir. Directed by Chris Padden, the choir provided seasonal and sentimental music for the ceremony. Guests included Mayor Michael Sullivan of Holyoke, Phyllis Capers, President and CEO of the Holyoke VNA & Hospice Life Care, Jaclyn Cashman of 22News emceed, and Susan Kelly of Springfield, who spoke on behalf of her family. Susan's beautiful words describing her father's and family's experience, with the help of Hospice Life Care, touched us all.

“For many families, when a loved one becomes ill, so many decisions need to be made about their care. Our family knew one thing – we wanted to give my father the best possible care so he could enjoy the precious time he had left with us. My dad’s only wish was to stay at home. And thanks to Hospice Life Care, we were able to do just that.”

“Most importantly we were able to say goodbye to my father. He knew he was slipping away and that the end was near. And because of Hospice, we had the opportunity to say goodbye to him not from a hospital room or nursing home, but from within the house where he had raised us and that held such wonderful memories for him.”

“Hospice Life Care provided us with the resources needed to get through each day....Words can never express our thanks to the wonderful, compassionate employees and volunteers....We can never convey how much it meant to our family to have them there, to help guide us. The support goes well beyond the patient’s death.”

“If you need to make the call to Hospice, please take comfort in knowing that you will be well taken care of. This is an establishment of real life heroes that truly love their work and bring an immeasurable amount of comfort to those they encounter.”

Holyoke's Mayor Michael Sullivan, Mayor Michael Tautznik of Easthampton, Mayor Edward Gibson of West Springfield, and Holyoke Mall Manager Bill Rogalski kicked off the Annual Mayor's wrapping day on Friday, December 14th. While donating their time and gift wrapping expertise, both their help and good humor were greatly appreciated. In the spirit of the season, Mayor Gibson and Bill Rogalski wore their brightest holiday ties and Mayor Sullivan shared candy canes. Even though it was Mayor Tautznik's first wrap, he jumped in and wrapped like a pro!

The wrapping pace picked up after December 15th, and there wasn't a down moment to be had. As closing time approached Christmas Eve, many of our "repeat" customers came by. One gentleman was there right at 5:45pm. "I'm here every year at closing, and you all do such a great job! I really depend on you!" Many things were wrapped Christmas Eve; lots of clothes, toys, jewelry and perfume sets. No matter the size or shape, we were happy to wrap it!