



Walker Wishes Holiday Program Underway ***Donate toys for children and youth in Walker's programs***

Needham, MA -- Walker, a non-profit leader in special education, behavioral health, and residential treatment for children and families, announced that the annual *Walker Wishes* Holiday Program is underway now through December 15, 2015, supporting the resilient children and youth served by Walker's therapeutic and academic programs.



"For more than 25 years, the *Walker Wishes* Holiday Program has been helping to make the holiday season brighter for the children who spend their holidays with Walker," said Elana Sable, Special Events Coordinator at Walker. "Through the generosity, commitment and spirit of organizations, volunteers, and friends, Walker is able to spread cheer and help children enjoy some of the familiar and warm comforts that come with celebrating the holidays."

Currently, more than a third of children in Walker's residential treatment programs don't have families to return to following their stay. Now, more than ever, the generous support of friends and organizations enables Walker to provide gifts for children who spend their holidays with Walker. In addition to the toy drive, there are many ways to get involved during the holiday season to support the therapeutic and academic programs Walker provides to thousands of children, teens, and families each year.

Here are four ways to get involved:

DONATE A TOY/ORGANIZE A TOY DRIVE

Walker is now accepting donated new, unwrapped toys for a boys and girls between the ages of three and 14. Organizations can become toy collection sites, host employee or member toy drives, or host a holiday "Party with a Purpose." All gifts for the *Walker Wishes* Holiday Toy Drive must be delivered by Tuesday, December 15th and are scheduled by appointment only.

There are also several drop-off bins conveniently located at Needham-area businesses. All Drop-off bins will be active from Friday, November 27, 2015 to Monday, December 14, 2015.

Drop-off sites include:

- Brookline Bank: 902 Highland Avenue, Needham
- Volante Farms: 292 Forest Street, Needham
- Walgreens: 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham
- Wellesley Dental Group: 5 Seaward Road, Wellesley
- Koko FitClub - Needham: 850 Highland Ave, Needham
- Fitness Together Newton Centre: 796 Beacon St # 2, Newton

PURCHASE HOLIDAY CARDS

Support Walker by purchasing holiday cards featuring artwork created by the children Walker serves. These charitable cards can also be personalized with an organization, business, or community group logo and message for clients, vendors, or residents. This year, Walker has an assortment of three different designs and greetings. The back of each card features information about Walker. The cards include:

- *Let It Snow* features an inside message “Happy Holidays”
- *Mittens* features an inside message, “Wishing you a wonderful holiday season!”
- *Warm Winter Wishes* features an inside message, “Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season and a happy and healthy New Year!”



MAKE A TRIBUTE GIFT

Honor an outstanding employee, valued client, or beloved relative with a gift to support the children and families Walker serves. Walker will send a handwritten holiday card to the person of your choosing informing them of your gift in their honor. Gift amounts are not disclosed to honorees and your gift is tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

VOLUNTEER

From toy sorting and delivery to a wrapping event, there are several seasonal volunteer opportunities with Walker. To get involved, please contact Sarah Whalen by email at SWhalen@walkercares.org or 781-292-2151.

To participate in the *Walker Wishes* Holiday Program or for more information, please visit walkercares.org/WalkerWishes/.

About Walker

Founded in 1961, Walker serves exceptionally vulnerable yet resilient children and youth facing complex social, emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Walker’s effective evidence-based and innovative therapeutic and academic programs positively impact nearly 20,000 children and youth each year throughout Greater Boston, the North and South Shores, as well as in Central Massachusetts. Through campuses in Needham and Watertown, community-based clinical and youth development services, professional seminars, consultations and out-posted Walker staff in public schools, Walker’s professionals partner with these children and youth, their families and communities to nurture hope, develop lifelong skills, and build their capacity to be successful in their community. To learn more, please visit us at WalkerCares.org or Facebook.com/WalkerCares.

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