

**Toys, Games, Books, Food and More Requested at Annual Holiday Drive
Town Center Bank partners with Lions Club to help struggling families**

Frankfort & New Lenox, IL - For most adults, participating in a \$10 grab bag is just a hassle. It's a hassle to buy the gift, it's a hassle to pretend you like the gift you've received, and it's a hassle to figure out how to politely dispose of it. But, says Alan Stratton of the Frankfort Lions Club, when a child in a struggling family receives such a gift, the result is simply magical.

About five years ago, the Frankfort Lions Club members had enough of their own holiday grab bag and decided to spend the money supplementing their annual food baskets with toys for the children in the families they served.

When Town Center Bank pitched in with their toy drive a few years ago, the program really took off. "Town Center's drive helps us so much," said Stratton. "We can give presents to all the little ones, we can give gift cards to the teens; we now have something for everyone in these families. We give all the toys, books, games to the parents, so Mom can decide if they come from her or from Santa. Board games are really welcome and so good for the whole family to come together."

The term "food basket", he says, is rather misleading. "Yes, there are all the ingredients for a wonderful Christmas dinner, but that's not all. We bring an entire pantry of food - 10 pounds of potatoes, bags of rice, canned vegetables, all kinds of food items - everything to really feed a family for a while."

Stratton says, "With the Bank's help, we can serve about 29 families who are in a crisis state. These are families who have lost jobs, lost spouses, perhaps suffered a catastrophic healthcare issue. When we deliver, everyone is so grateful - and we are too, to be a part of this. Parents cry, there is laughter and so much hugging. It makes you feel really good to know this is all very much appreciated."

Town Center Bank, he says, is also very much appreciated. "They make it so much easier for us. Beyond collecting during their drive, they wrap all the gifts and label them with ages and gender. The amount of items the Bank collects is especially appreciated, as then there is a much larger selection of toys and games to choose from for each child and teen. The Lions have a great relationship with Town Center Bank and we admire this bank that really cares for our community. We look to partner with them whenever we can. We help with their school supply drive - that shows they are really thinking about this community. Kids need school supplies to do well in school and that drive helps with the cost of enrolling in school."

Town Center Bank's Annual Holiday Drive runs from November 27th through December 14th. Both Bank locations, in New Lenox at 1938 E Lincoln Hwy and in Frankfort at 20181 S. LaGrange Road, are asking for donations of new toys, games, books, funds and food. The Bank is also a year-round drop-off location for local food pantries. For more information, call Shirley Pirko at 815-806-7007.

Stratton says, "I can't say enough nice things about Town Center Bank and their involvement in our community. They are really special."

#####