

The following was told by Joe Di Leo
at the Per Niente Club Christmas Party
Westwood Country Club
December 18, 2013

Welcome one and all to our annual Christmas Party. Tonight marks the 22nd of such events and attendance wise it is a record breaker.

I thank you for being here and I thank Bob Mangano for his commitment in organizing this event. Because of his talent and skills he overcame the challenges associated with putting the pieces of this puzzle together to make it a successful evening.

And I thank those who contributed so generously for helping those in our community via Per Niente's Christmas Fund. As such, the Fund has increased dramatically allowing us to help more and more people.

At Thanksgiving, we distributed turkeys and staples to food pantries and churches thus ensuring a traditional Thanksgiving for 125 families.



*Sal Maggiore and Peter Tasca
Delivering turkeys on Jefferson Avenue*

Last Christmas, Per Niente donated a record \$9000 to various organizations and individuals. Now, due to your overwhelming generosity that record is shattered. Over \$15,000 was raised to clothe, feed and provide cheer for the disadvantaged.

This year our accomplishments are as follows:

We purchased a motorized wheel chair for the Muscular Dystrophy Association to aid those who need one. We were assured the chair will be used as needed. To that end, we wish MDA Godspeed in their endeavor.

Per Niente donated \$1000 to Christmas Is For Kids, an integral part of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Western NY. No child, whether infirmed, sheltered, in group homes or in foster care will be omitted. We sincerely hope our donation ensures a bright holiday for those who don't have what our grandchildren have.

From the Heritage Center, a foundation that advocates for children and adults with developmental disabilities, we learned that a family of five whose wish-list

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*Joe Di Leo and Bob Mangano
Turkeys for West Side Community Center*



*Larry LaDuca, Peter Tasca, Joe Di Leo, Sal Maggiore
at
Old Landmark New Covenant. C.O.G.I.C.*

was devoid of toys and electronic games needed clothing. We obtained sizes and shopped for - and gift wrapped - coats, shirts, boots, trousers and other items that were then disseminated through the Heritage Center.

We also donated \$1000 to the Little Portion Friary, a group of 100 plus volunteers who provide food and temporary shelter for inner city homeless.

On Buffalo's far East Side at St Lawrence Church on East Delevan Ave, through counselors, Luke and Patricia Dyer, we offered to aid families with special needs. They told of hundreds of low income families that frequent their clinic and quickly mentioned two families. One, a single parent family with six children whose freezer portion of their refrigerator was inoperable and couldn't maintain food for any length of time.

The second, also a single parent house-

hold had no means to wash or dry clothes and linens. As such, every week they walk multiple times to a Laundromat.

Per Niente presented \$2000 to the St Lawrence Outreach to purchase a freezer for family number one - and a washer and dryer - for family number two - in hopes that their lives will be made somewhat easier.

One of the poorest areas of Buffalo is the lower West Side, once home to many here tonight. In the past we have helped their needy and we did it again this year.

Through Msgr. David Gallivan, the pastor of Holy Cross Church we learned of Jose and Tania who live on Niagara Street. The following are the Pastors words: "Jose and Tania have two daughters, ages 10 and 7. Each parent has numerous health problems. Jose is unable to work and Tania has been hospitalized several times with major surgery. They must soon vacate their Niagara Street flat since the landlord has other plans for



*Vincent Scime, Joe Di Leo, Joe Heary, Bob Mangano
Presenting a gift to Friends of the Night People*

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*Bob Mangano, Vincent Scime, Joe Di Leo,
Presenting toys to the staff of Buffalo Urban League*

it. Jose and Tania are very much involved in our programs of Religious education as well as on some Parish Council committees. Even their daughters, students at Catholic Academy of West Buffalo are most helpful in the tasks of religious education. Since they must move there is great expense involved. Anything Per Niente can do for them would be appreciated." Jose, Tania and their daughters received a \$1000 Per Niente Christmas present.

Journey's End Refugee Services is a Christian community-based organization. Their mission is welcoming refugees without regard to ethnic origin or creed and to assist them to become healthy, independent, successful contributing members of our Community.

Many of them are experiencing a harsh Buffalo winter for the first time. That is why

we asked those in attendance tonight, for clothing that will keep them and others warm. Journey's End also received \$2000 in Tops market gift cards that they will distribute judiciously.

The Buffalo Urban League's Adoption and Foster Care Program hosts an annual Christmas Party for foster and adoptive children. It depends on community donations to supply toys for these children. A few days before the party we learned that more toys were needed for over thirty 30 children, ages 6 months - 18 years. Per Niente purchased and delivered 31 toys and we did it in time for distribution at the

Christmas Party. I was in attendance as were my wife, daughter and her two children. We were collectively moved by the enjoyment of these wonderful children who were opening these gifts and seeing the expressions on so many of their astonished faces.

Friends of The Night People help the poor,



*Joe Di Leo, Vincent Scime, Bob Mangano
With Msgr. Davis Gallivan, pastor Holy Cross Church*

homeless and the destitute with food, clothing, medical care and counseling. All without charge. They, like others, rely on the generosity of volunteers and contributions. Friends of the Night People received \$1000 from Per Niente.

Buffalo's Ladies of Charity, women volunteers who embrace the ideals of Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac. Collectively, they inspire and encourage one another while working to break our community's cycle of poverty. Unfortunately, they now desperately need toiletries for whom they serve. Per Niente provided \$500 for these items.

Collectively, the West Side Community Services and the Old Landmark New Covenant Church on the East Side received from us \$1400 worth of Tops Market gift cards to be distributed at Christmas time to the needy.

We visited Veterans One Stop Center, an organization that improves the well-being of all U.S. Veterans and their immediate families that live in Western NY. We learned of a single male parent with six children in need of help. We gave them \$500.

Last year, the Per Niente Club gave \$500 scholarships to two African refugees enrolled at Catholic Academy. Both are altar servers at Holy Cross Church. They and their families, are active in the parish community. Upon graduation, they enrolled at Canisius High School and Sacred Heart Academy.

In 2014 we will again place in trust a \$1000 scholarship for a deserving student in our community. We must not forget - education is the road to success for our next generation.

Nine years ago with only a few members we agreed to help those in need at Christmas time. That



Toni Di Leo shopping for toys to be donated to children at the Buffalo Urban League



Refugees receiving Tops Gift Cards, donated by the Per Niente Club

year we donated \$250 to our cause.

Now, in 2013 and with a membership approaching 500 and a Christmas Fund totaling \$15000 you can see we've come a long way and we have touched many lives.

On behalf of our membership, `Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one and all.