

Area merchants and organizations are finding ways to help our neighbors this holiday season. You can, too. To find out what's going on and how you can add your support, turn to this column each Sunday in the South Oakland Eccentric.

If your organization or business is helping those in need this holiday season, share that information with readers to let them know how they can help. E-mail the information to sarmbruster@hometownlife.com.

Giving back

SOUTHFIELD - Farbman Group, a leading full-service real estate company based in Southfield, devoted its company holiday party this year to giving back to the community. To gain admittance to the party, held at Langan's Nor-West Lanes in Southfield, each Farbman employee was required bring five toys to donate to Jimmy's Kids. Jimmy's Kids is a Royal Oak-based charity that provides toys and clothing to children ages 4-11 who are physically or emotionally challenged.

"With the current downturn in the economy, our employees requested that we scale back our holiday party this year and focus on helping a local charity," said Farbman Group Chief Financial Officer Andy Gutman. "We were able to donate more than 200 toys to Jimmy's Kids and had a great time bowling."

Farbman Group is committed to supporting local philanthropic efforts. In 2009 alone, the company has donated more than \$100,000, and offered more than 1,000 hours of community service to metro Detroit charities.

Jimmy's Kids

CLAWSON - For real-life Santa Jim Tuman, the recent economic downturn is a reason to get more motivated. Tuman is the founder of Jimmy's Kids, a program started in 1989 to create Christmas parties for local children 4-11 years of age who are indigent, physically or emotionally challenged, or forgotten. When Tuman started the program, he serviced 22 kids in Detroit; the program has since expanded to service more than 30,000 children and families in need.

Not content to rest on these impressive laurels, Tuman has set a goal of helping even more needy kids this year, a hefty challenge even in a good economy. "With the recent economic troubles locally, it's more important than ever that every child be able to feel loved and wanted at Christmas. It's my goal to reach out to every school, church and neighborhood association that needs help this season." So, Tuman has joined forces with local sporting goods chain, Play It Again Sports. The chain operates 11 stores in southeastern Michigan, including one in Clawson. The stores sell both new and gently used sporting equipment. All 11 of the Play It Again Sports locations will serve as host sites for the collection of toys and coats for the needy.