



What exactly is LTHC Homeless Services? LTHC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide services to individuals, families, and Veterans who are experiencing homelessness. We are the coordinated point of entry into services. At our Engagement Center, we provide for basic needs such as meals, showers, laundry, lockers, etc. We also have Case Managers who help people work on their barriers to housing and getting them connected to employment, health and wellness, and housing services. Our goal is to help each person obtain long-term sustainable housing in the community.

Who are the families that get supported? Going from homeless-to-housed can be difficult for a family that has multiple issues that they need support with so LTHC has two programs for families who are ending their homelessness. Whenever possible, our staff helps civilian and Veteran families get connected into a lease in the community and helps put short-term supports in place to keep them there. For families with more complex issues, LTHC owns 11 apartments for families where there are services on-site. In both, the families work with our Case Manager who provides support to help them stabilize. For the Secret Santa program, families from both programs are helped.

What is the Secret Santa program exactly? LTHC serves many families who have experienced homelessness and we are helping to get them into a stable housing solution. We look for sponsors to “support” a family with their wants and needs at the holidays – one less thing for them to worry about. Sponsors can be individuals or groups. We ask that the sponsor purchase items from the wish list that LTHC will provide (buying for adults and kids) and deliver the items wrapped by a certain December date. Our staff will distribute the presents.

Do we support a whole family? Yes, LTHC asks that sponsors commit to providing for the parents and all children in a particular family. They will complete a wish list with our LTHC staff to help them provide information that will be useful to shoppers.

Do we get to choose the family? Not really. You tell LTHC what you are comfortable with in terms of family size and we will select a family that fits your request.

How much does it cost to support a family? Of course, that depends on the size of the family you request! Many times, sponsors get their own friends, families, and co-workers to help so that it isn't a financial burden to any individual. While there is no set amount, our past sponsors typically spend between \$100-\$150 per family member.

How many gifts should I buy? Again, there is no requirement for a minimum of gifts. Ideally, each family member would receive 3-5 gifts. Please understand that too many gifts are not a good thing for these families as they have limited space and too much stuff can be overwhelming. Also, several of these families live in close proximity to each other and we hope to avoid “competition” between the kiddos after the holidays.

Am I obligated to get everything on their wish list? No! The lists are provided as a general guide as far as sizes, preferences, and wishes. Hopefully, it will be a helpful tool for you and/or your group while shopping.

What are some typical examples of gift requests? Generally speaking, families ask for clothes, shoes, games, books, and toys for children. Parents tend to ask for more useful items like appliances, bedding, household goods, or gift cards. Items are expected to be new, wrapped, and labeled. It is not expected that the sponsor purchases expensive items.

Do we deliver directly to the family? No, we ask that all gifts get returned to LTHC by a specific deadline so that our staff can get them distributed in time.

What about gift cards? These are great and helpful if you are stuck on ideas. Families certainly appreciate gift cards to grocery stores (Wal-Mart and Payless are the most convenient to their location).

What about food donations? If you would like to include non-perishable food with your gifts, the family would be thrilled! However, it is not a requirement and should not include anything that needs to be refrigerated/frozen.

Can we send cards or letters? This would be a very thoughtful touch.

Should we include gift receipts with the items? Please give all gift receipts in a labeled envelope to the LTHC staff when you deliver the gifts. We will hold on to them and coordinate any returns that may need to happen.

Are these donations tax deductible? LTHC is a 501c3 organization and your in-kind donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the IRS. We will send you a thank you letter (which acts as tax receipt) but we encourage you to consult with your tax preparer for details. You MUST include a completed Secret Santa In-Kind Form when you deliver the gifts.

When and where do I bring in my gifts? All gifts are due to the LTHC administrative offices no later than Friday, December 9 by noon. However, you are welcome to bring them any weekday in December by making an appointment with Kaitlyn. The admin offices are located at the Engagement Center, 815 North 12th Street, which is in between Salem and Union Streets. Park on 13th street or in the parking lot, let Kaitlyn know you are here and meet her at door #4 on 13th street.

Please remember to deliver the presents pre-wrapped but CLEARLY labeled for whom they are gifted. If you can package your entire set of gifts in boxes or bags which can be more easily kept together, even better!

I loved this so much, how can I stay involved with LTHC year-round? We find this happens a lot and we welcome your support because people are homeless all year – not just at the holidays. Contact Jennifer Shook at jshook@lthc.net to find out how to get more involved! Make sure to follow up at LTHC Homeless Services on Facebook, @LafTransHsg, or [lthc_homeless_services](https://www.instagram.com/lthc_homeless_services) on Instagram.

I have questions about the Secret Santa program or some other opportunity at LTHC, who should I contact?. Kaitlyn Layton at klayton@lthc.net or 765-423-4880 ext. 4055.