

JBFCFS Friends are key link for Holiday Gift Program

On a recent Sunday, a group of young adults from JBFCFS Friends traveled to the agency warehouse in Jersey City, New Jersey where they walked across the vast storage space laid out with bins of toys marked Girls or Boys Ages 0-2, 2-4, 4-6 and on up to the teen years. Each volunteer gathered toys, games and stuffed animals for four hours with time out for a coffee break and conversation.

By day's end, 30 oversized boxes were packed with more than 2000 gifts ready for delivery on December 1 to children under the care of JBFCFS counseling centers, preventive services, day treatment and residential programs.

It's all part of the Holiday Gift Program by Volunteer Services, which also coordinates JBFCFS Friends, a program for men and women in their 20s and 30s who choose from a variety of activities to support the agency's services.

"We've run this holiday gift program for more than 15 years," says **Jamie Bloom, MBA**, Director, Volunteer Services. "And we've relied on **Robert Reyes**, Maintenance Worker/Driver, for the past



Aaron Taishoff boxes toys as part of Volunteer Services Holiday Gift Program.

13 years to deliver all of the boxes on time. He makes round trips between Jersey City and JBFCFS programs in the five boroughs and Westchester. Robbie's never been late."

This year, JBFCFS applied for a holiday giving program through Hasbro, a toy producer, and was selected by a lottery system to receive 15 boxes of board games and toys. The NBC "Today" Show Toy Drive makes a generous contribution annually, and other vendors donate as well.

The Holiday Gift Program also welcomes monetary contributions which are used for

stipends. Programs typically provide stipends for holiday celebrations and special items, such as a ping pong table which Brooklyn-based Break-Free Adolescent Services will purchase for their youth lounge.

"The program is an easy way for volunteers to feel a part of the giving spirit of the holidays," notes **Lisa Marcus, LMSW**, Program Manager.

With the help of JBFCFS Friends, more than 2,600 children in treatment at JBFCFS will have a more festive holiday season this December.

Volunteer activities for teens and adults of all ages are available throughout the year.
Call 212-632-4687

