

# CROSSNET CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING GUIDE



**SPONSOR / DONOR  
HANDBOOK**

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*CrossNet Ministries  
Desires to Build  
Relationships while  
Building Resources*

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# CROSSNET MINISTRIES' MISSION

*CrossNet exists to offer HELP and HOPE in the name of Jesus Christ by empowering people in the ELANCO community.*

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## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM MISSION & VISION

*Use this handbook as a guide for all your Christmas Gift Giving Program questions and answers!*

### **The Christmas Program Mission:**

to ease financial burdens, build resources, and to match community support with under-resourced families in the ELANCO School District by providing a Christmas meal and gifts for their children.

### **The Christmas Program Vision:**

to create an opportunity for the ELANCO community to come together to make sure every under-resourced family has food, some gifts, and is shown the love of Christ during the Christmas season. Together we can bring help, hope, and big smiles to families at Christmas.

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Be the hub that bridges the gap of need in our community through partnership with others.
- Provide students a brighter Christmas.
- Empower parents/guardians to utilize this free resource so their essential funds can provide for other needs.
- Build and model community ownership through volunteering and donating.
- Bring people together for one day of safe, fun, and healthy interactions for fellowship and relationship building.



# THE JOURNEY OF A WISH LIST



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## STATS

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*We have been keeping Christmas STATS since 2013! The numbers below represent the total number of students served for that season.*

**2013 = 380**

**2014 = 400**

**2015 = 429**

**2016 = 447**

**2017 = 462**

**2018 = 546**

**2019 = 550**

**2020 = 528 (Covid-19)**

**2021 = 542**

**2022 = 605**

**2023 =**

**We continue to grow!**

### 1 **Family Applications!**

Each July, CrossNet partners with the ELANCO School District to send out applications and **Wish Lists** to qualifying families. Handwritten **Wish Lists** start arriving in CrossNet's mailbox by the end of August!

### 2 **Sponsors!**

In September, we begin to promote the program to sponsors in the community. Information goes out via email, social media, our website, and in the local PennySaver. Sponsors can submit an application with the number of students they desire to sponsor. Once we receive their application, the **Wish List** matching process begins. Donors are made up of local churches, businesses, small groups, organizations, and individuals.

### 3 **Donor Matches Made!**

From September through November, families and sponsors are carefully matched! Sponsors receive a copy of the student's **Wish List** and begin to shop for gifts from that list.

### 4 **Gift Drop Off!**

Sponsors drop off the purchased **Wish List** gifts, unwrapped, during Workshop Week in December. Volunteers will sort and prep gifts for our Event Day.

### 5 **Event Day!**

Parents/Guardians will pick up their child's gifts and see that their child has received many of the items they requested on their **Wish Lists**! On this day, parents/guardians have the opportunity to wrap their family's gifts, choose stocking stuffers, and enjoy a Christmas treat!



# HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN HELPING OUR COMMUNITY THIS CHRISTMAS! YOUR SUPPORT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES' LIVES, AND YOUR SERVICE WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP OF NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY.



## Christmas Program Overview

The Christmas Gift Giving Program is an opportunity for our community to come together to make sure needs are met and families are empowered and loved during the Christmas season.

This program is an assistance program in which an individual or group, sponsors a family and purchases new toys, clothing, shoes, or gift cards for children ages 0-18.

## How Does the Christmas Program Impact the Community?

Every Christmas there are children who do not receive gifts because their families cannot afford the expense. This year, CrossNet is serving more families than ever before, who never expected to need help and cannot financially keep up between post-pandemic issues and inflation.

For 11 years, CrossNet has ensured that children in the ELANCO community have a blessed Christmas season. In 2022, around 605 children received Christmas gifts including toys, bikes, doll houses, shoes, clothing, books, and more, through this program. Our hope is that an impact will be felt by relieving stress and seeing bright smiles on the faces of many children.

## How is CrossNet's Program Unique?

CrossNet is unique because you (the sponsor) can experience a special connection with your "sponsored" child. You are matched and receive your child's or children's name, and a personalized Wish List for each child.

We prayerfully match families with sponsors to make your shopping experience fun and positive. We could tell many stories, but here are just a few examples:

- *A few years ago, a boy listed Karate lessons on his Wish List. His donor granted that wish by purchasing a gift certificate to a local karate school not knowing if he would be able to attend. Well, as it turns out, he did attend and has been a regular student ever since!*
- *One young girl noted that she loved to bake, and asked for baking supplies. I was thrilled when I saw the response of her sponsor in providing her with all kinds of baking essentials and cookbooks.*
- *Many students request beds, mattresses, bedding, and dressers for clothing out of need rather than want. It is heartwarming to see how many of these requests are met by caring sponsors, in addition to their wants as well.*

These are just some examples of how God worked through these donors to meet a very specific or unique need in the lives of each of these students.

We invite you to share in the Christmas joy this season by being a sponsor with CrossNet Ministries. **Sponsorship registration runs September through November each year.** Check out our website, or this handbook for more details, or go to [www.elancocross.org](http://www.elancocross.org) to download a copy of this handbook.

# CHRISTMAS PROGRAM TERMINOLOGY!



## Christmas Program Terminology or "LINGO"

There are a few terms, or "lingo," that may be helpful to you as you consider being part of our Christmas program.

**Sponsor/Donor/Secret Shopper:** These three words are used interchangeably. They represent the donor who is "sponsoring" a child/ren for Christmas. They agree to purchase gifts or gift cards from their child/ren's Wish List.

**Student/Child/Children:** These three words are used interchangeably. They represent the person who is requesting and receiving the Christmas gifts as written out on their Wish List form.

**Family Participant:** These are families that have registered and have qualified for the CrossNet Christmas Gift Giving Program.

**Workshop Week:** This is a week set aside to receive, sort, and organize gifts, for our Christmas Gift Giving Event. This week is typically held the first week of December.

**Christmas Gift Giving Event:** This is the day we set aside for parents/guardians to pick-up their children's gifts. It is a fun-filled event with many opportunities and resources for our parents and guardians.

**Giving Tree Coordinator:** He or she is the designated point of contact from a group or business agreeing to sponsor children. This individual directly corresponds with CrossNet Ministries' Events Manager on behalf of the group and ensures the assignments of children and collection of gifts runs smoothly.

**Giving Tree Tag:** A paper tag or "ornament" that has a specific child's name, age, gender, clothing sizes, and Wish List items listed. The tag has all the necessary information to purchase gifts for your matched child. Giving Tree Coordinators can create their own tag or download a pre-made tag from CrossNet Ministries' website. You can also make copies from the example in the Appendix.

**Sponsor Application:** This is a form for interested sponsors to fill out with information about you as an individual sponsor or someone representing your group. This is where you tell us how many children or families you would like to sponsor. CrossNet uses this information to successfully match you with a family enrolled in the program.

**Wish List:** This is literally a handwritten Christmas Wish List from a child or parent enrolled in our Christmas program. It will be shared with sponsors to be used as a shopping guide for your sponsored child.



# IMPORTANT DATES & LOCATIONS



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## 1 IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2023

### AUGUST 2023:

- Family Participant Applications & Wish Lists are sent out to potential participating families in partnership with the ELANCO School District.

### SEPTEMBER 2023:

- Sponsorship Applications are available online and via email.
- This is the perfect time for groups and Giving Tree Coordinators to start their preparations. Contact [lisa@elancocross.org](mailto:lisa@elancocross.org) for specific details.

### OCTOBER 2023:

- Consider hosting a stocking stuffer or toy drive. CrossNet has 20 collection bins available to put out in the community.
- Consider hosting a **specific** toy drive (i.e. all legos, all nerf products, all baby dolls, etc.). Contact Lisa for more details at [lisa@elancocross.org](mailto:lisa@elancocross.org).
- Encourage your colleagues, friends, and family to sponsor a family.

### NOVEMBER 2023:

- Collection Drive month!
- Shop, shop, shop! Take advantage of all those early Black Friday sales! Remember to order online items early!
- Volunteer Sign-ups begin! Online sign-up begin November 1, a link will be emailed.
- Family Registration deadline is November 17, 2023

### DECEMBER 2023:

- Workshop Week – December 4–8, 2023
- Gift Drop & Stocking Stuffer Drop-Off – December 4–8, 2023
- Christmas Gift Giving Event – December 9, 2023

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## 2 IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

**CrossNet Offices:** 123 West Franklin Street, New Holland, PA

**Christmas Workshop Drop-Off and Volunteer Locations:** CrossNet Youth Center, located at 110 West Franklin Street, New Holland, PA

**Christmas Gift Giving Event:** CrossNet Youth Center and Warehouse 100 at 100 & 110 West Franklin Street, New Holland, PA

# PROGRAM BASICS



## **PARTICIPATING FAMILY SELECTIONS:**

CrossNet sends out the Christmas Gift Giving paperwork and information through local organizations, the school district, and churches. Family registration runs from August to November. Children newborn to 18 years old who meet the criteria are excepted into the program.

To qualify, families must **(1)** qualify for the FREE lunch program in the ELANCO School District, **(2)** be currently living in the ELANCO School District area, and/or **(3)** be referred to us by CrossNet Social Workers, an ELANCO School Counselors, or a partnering ELANCO Church.

## **SPONSORSHIP BASICS:**

### **Who Can Be a Christmas Sponsor?**

Everyone! If you or your group are interested in providing joy to a child, this program is a great way for your organization, business, church, community club, or individual to come together (virtually or in person) to give back during the Christmas season. You can register as either an individual or on behalf of your group.

### **Is it Hard to Be a Christmas Sponsor?**

No, it is not hard! CrossNet will assist you throughout the process and does our best to make it easy for anyone to participate. Families/Students are matched with a sponsor; CrossNet staff provides the necessary instructions, materials, and will distribute the gifts to the families.

### **How Do I Register to Be a Christmas Sponsor?**

Simply fill out the short Sponsorship Application included in the back of this Handbook and submit to us by November 10. Copies of the application can also be emailed to you or found on our website at [www.elancocross.org](http://www.elancocross.org).

### **When Will I Receive My Wish Lists?**

Starting in mid-September, CrossNet begins the overall family matching process. Upon receiving your individual or group application request, you will receive a confirmation email with an attached Wish List for each child sponsored. Wish Lists include general information about the family, children's clothing sizes, and a number of wish list requests. Once you have these in hand you can begin your shopping!

### **How Do I Drop Off My Gifts?**

Drop off all gifts (and Stocking Stuffers) at CrossNet Youth Center at 110 W. Franklin Street, New Holland during our Christmas Workshop week that runs December 4-6 from 9AM to 7PM or December 7 from 9AM to 2PM.

### **How Much Money Should I Spend?**

We are asking donors to spend \$100 per child (i.e. \$400 for a family of four). Donors should spend equal amounts of each child gift(s) and if a child has checked the GIFT CARD ONLY OPTION a \$100 in gift card(s) should be given for each child with this option.



# PROGRAM BASICS



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## SPONSORSHIP BASICS CON'T:

### **What is the Purpose of Spending \$100 Per Child/Student?**

It ensures that families will receive quality gifts and that the same dollar value is distributed evenly across all the families enrolled in the Christmas Gift Giving Program. If you are not sure how to shop we suggests donors use their \$100 to focus on the students "wants." CrossNet has various programs that can assist with some "essential" items such as clothing & food. If you typically spent more than \$100 on each child, we ask that you would stick to the \$100 and consider sponsoring an additional child or family.

### **Why Should I Include Gift Receipts?**

Gift receipts make it easier for families to return gifts, especially clothing. Sizing on clothing varies greatly between brands and is the main reason we ask for gift receipts. Also, children grow quickly, they may have grown a few of inches from the time they filled out their form in September until they receive the item in December.

### **I Want to Help but I Don't Want to Go Shopping. Can I Still Participate?**

Of course! We realize not all of our donors enjoy shopping or want to travel the distance to shop. We have a number of other ways to get involved:

- Gift Card Donations: Older students love gift cards! Would you consider donating \$25-\$75 gift cards for a teen? We suggest Walmart, Target, or Amazon gift cards.
- Stocking Stuffer Collections: Donate small items such as gum, candy, socks, toiletries, and small toys to be used as stocking stuffers.
- Cookies: If you love to bake, we are always in need of cookies for our volunteers and parents during Workshop Week and at our Giveaway Event.
- Wrapping Paper & Tape: This basic need is helpful and used at the Giveaway Event.

### **Can I Make a Monetary Donation Instead?**

Absolutely! Please visit our website at [elancocross.org](http://elancocross.org) and click on the DONATE tab to donate. Please designate your gift for the Christmas Program or send contributions to the following address:

#### **CrossNet Ministries**

Attention: Christmas Program  
PO Box 154, New Holland, PA 17557

### **Can I Volunteer to Help With the Christmas Program?**

Yes! We need individuals to help during our Christmas Workshop Week (December 4-7, 2023) and at our Giveaway Event on Saturday, December 9. An online volunteer sign-up will be emailed (or can be requested) on November 1, for interested individuals. Space for groups can be limited; please contact Lisa if more information or details are needed

**Thank you for participating in the 2023 Christmas Gift Giving Program and making this Christmas season special for our families! For all other questions, please contact 717-355-2454 or email [lisa@elancocross.org](mailto:lisa@elancocross.org).**

# GIVING TREE DETAILS

TOGETHER WE CAN BRING HOPE  
AND SMILES TO CHILDREN THIS  
CHRISTMAS!

## The Concept Behind a Giving Tree

The organization (church or business) sets up a real or artificial Christmas tree in a central location. For example, in a business, the tree might be set up next to the front door or in the break room. Paper gift tags are hung from the branches. Each Giving Tree tag represents a local child from a family in need. The gift tags include some basic information about the recipient, including their age, clothing size, shoe size and a few wish list items. CrossNet provides the organization with copies of each child's wish list which includes all their basic information.

Anyone who wants to help local families can pull a tag off of the tree. The "secret shopper" buys the wish list items for the child on the tag and returns the unwrapped gifts to the Giving Tree organizer by the designated deadline, with the tag attached to the outside of the gift.

When all the gifts for a child are received, place all unwrapped gifts for that specific child in a black garbage bag and label with their last name on the outside of the bag. Deliver bag(s) to CrossNet for distribution to the recipients on Event Day.

## Planning a Giving Tree

**There are some logistical questions to settle before creating a Giving Tree.**

- Select a Giving Tree **COORDINATOR** for your organization to contact and coordinate details with a CrossNet staff member.
- The **COORDINATOR** will be responsible for communicating the program details within your business, organization, or church.

**Other questions the Giving Tree coordinators should be prepared to answer:**

- How far before Christmas should gifts be returned to the Giving Tree? *That is up to the coordinator, but all gifts need to be at CrossNet by December 6.*
- Should I wrap my items? *No, sponsors or "secret shoppers" are asked not to wrap items, which lets the coordinator verify that everyone is getting an appropriate present.*
- Will the coordinator be wrapping the gifts themselves? *No, gifts are returned to CrossNet unwrapped for parents/guardians to wrap at the Giveaway Event on December 9.*
- How much should I spend on each child? *We ask donors to spend \$100 per child. Complete spending details can be found on pages 6 and 7 of this handbook?*
- What should I do if some tags are left on the tree or if people take tags, but they don't buy gifts? *The answer should be determined by the coordinator and organization as to which best fits our program.*
- Are you able to add an alternate giving component? *Yes, people who want to donate gifts to kids but don't want to shop can donate money instead, which you can use to buy gifts for unfilled tags.*



# GIVING TREE DETAILS

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## Creating Giving Tree Tags

You can create your own paper tags with space to write the child's key information or you can print and use pre-made tags from the CrossNet website. Tags include the age and gender of the recipient(s). They should also include a few things on the child's wish list, like clothing sizes so gifters can buy wearable items. **IMPORTANT: Please include gift receipts for all clothing, shoes, or wearable items.**

Include a gift drop-off deadline (that coincides with CrossNet's date) on the tag along with a request for the tag to be taped to the unwrapped gift. This helps you track which gift is intended for which recipient. Maintain a careful list of all the Giving Tree tags you create so you can track which gifts have been bought. We suggest a spreadsheet or checklist system.

## Organizing an Online Giving Tree

A traditional Giving Tree works only if people are in proximity of the physical tree. Maybe your workplace has gone remote, and co-workers aren't in the office to pull tags from a real tree but you still want to include them. You can organize an online Giving Tree for your work-from-home employees or to share with extended family and friends. With an online Giving Tree, donors can give from anywhere. Have online donors ship items directly to you. You can organize and account for their gifts before delivering to CrossNet for Workshop Week (12/4-7). **IMPORTANT: Please ensure online gifts/donations have a delivery date prior to your program deadline.** Be creative! There are a lot of ways to set up this program depending on your work/church environment and on how many people are involved.

## How Do I Coordinate the Collection of Gifts?

- Ask everyone to return their gifts the week before CrossNet's gift deadline to ensure all your gifts are returned. This gives you time prepare gifts for delivery. Be sure to remind everyone about the deadline, via email or as an in-person plea, a week prior..
- Once gifts are returned, clarify and check off the child's name on your spreadsheet or checklist to ensure all gifts are received. **All gifts for one specific child should be put into one black trash bag and clearly marked on the outside with that child's tag.**
- Gift drop-off will be during Workshop Week at CrossNet Youth Center. Carts and volunteers will be available to help you unload. See Important Dates and Locations in this Handbook for more information.
- Some organizations host their Christmas party around the collection date. This is a fun way to celebrate your organization's participation in giving back to the community!

While organizing a Giving Tree does take some upfront work for you, it makes donating really easy for the generous people around you. Knowing that kids are going to have presents under the tree and making Christmas time less stressful for local families in need is worth it all!

# GIVING TREE DETAILS

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## Giving Tree Organizer Tips

- In July, create a Save-the-Date flyer or email to announce to your organization that you are participating this year.
- In September, create and distribute flyers and emails promoting your upcoming Giving Tree Event with instructions on how to sign up or sponsor a child.
- Create an electronic spreadsheet or checklist with the student name, basic info, and the wish list items listed as a way to track assignments and tag listings.
- Advertise that participants can donate financially or give gift cards instead of physically shopping.
- Create a friendly competition within your organization. Build team spirit between departments to see who can sponsor the most students or raise the most money towards purchasing gifts.
- Host an interoffice fundraiser to purchase gifts.
- Encourage all your Family and Friends to participate.

## Capture the Joy

- Capture the fun and festivities of your Giving Tree experience and share with CrossNet, on Facebook or Instagram or LinkedIn. Show us the pile of growing gifts or document your shopping trip. We love it all! Tag us @CrossNetMinistries and use this hashtag #GivingTreeCNM





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# APPENDIX

*This section contains additional resources used in the Christmas Gift Giving Program.*

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## RESOURCES CONTAINED IN THE APPENDIX ARE AS LISTED BELOW

**Sponsor / Donor Letter & Application:** This is the application has important details such as how much to spend, drop off gifts and on how to get involved in the Christmas Gift Giving Program. Please feel free to use these forms or make copies of them to become a Christmas Sponsor/Donor.

**Giving Tree Tags:** This is a sample of the Giving Tree Tags that are available for your use on our website for your use.

**Family Participant Application:** This is an example of the Participant Application. Please feel free to forward it on to anyone who you believe could benefit from this program.

**Note:** we have Family Applications in Spanish & Russian upon request.

- For a family to qualify, they must (1) qualify for the FREE lunch program in the ELANCO School District, (2) be currently living in the ELANCO School District area, and/or (3) be referred to us by CrossNet Social Workers, an ELANCO School Counselors, or a partnering ELANCO Church.

**Participant Wish List:** This form is an example of what a family/child fills out and what you will receive as a sponsor. **Note:** we now have Wish Lists in Spanish & Russian upon request.

**Gift Card Only Informational Flyer:** This flyer has general information needed for our participants, and for you to understand this gift receiving and/or giving option.

**Christmas Collection Drive Flyer:** Use this flyer for your personal or group collection drives. This form can be used for **BOTH a Toy Drive and/or a Stocking Stuffer Drive**. Drives typically run through the month of November. Contact Lisa by October 20, if you are interested in hosting a drive, or collecting specific toys, i.e. lego sets, nerf toys, baby doll, etc. **Please Note:** CrossNet only has 20 bins to share with the community. These bins are reserved on a first come, first served basis. We also have a volunteer driver to deliver and pick-up bins if needed.



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## CONTACT US

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