

# My Joyful Heart volunteers collect funds, spread joy

SUBMITTED BY MY JOYFUL HEART

My Joyful Heart has a new group of volunteers who are making a big impact. Six teenagers from the area came together earlier this year to form a Junior Board of Directors to help raise funds and in-kind donations for charity. During their first board meeting, they voted on officers and elected Grace Pawelczyk of Frankfort, President; Delaney LoConte of Mokena, Vice President/Secretary; and Lauren Kopec of Frankfort, Treasurer. Directors are Regan LoConte of Mokena, Payton Moyzis of Frankfort, and Maura Fenessey of Joliet.

"These young women certainly don't let grass grow under their feet," said Diane Carroll, My Joyful Heart Founder and Executive Director. "They have so many good ideas and so much enthusiasm. By only their second meeting, they were strategizing on how to expand the annual food drive that volunteer, Regan LoConte, started 4 years ago and up until this year



The Junior Board members (left to right) Maura Fenessey, Regan LoConte, Lauren Kopec, Grace Pawelczyk and Delaney LoConte pose for a picture after hours of sorting food donations. PHOTO SUBMITTED

has managed on her own," Carroll added.

"The vote was unanimous that expanding Regan's donation drive made good sense," commented Grace Pawelczyk. "Regan started the food drive in 2012 and each year has brought in amazing amounts of food donated by very generous people. By having all of us working with her on the project this year, the donations have almost tripled," said Pawelczyk.

First the teens collected

brown bags from local grocery stores and then they created flyers with details about the food drive. They distributed the bags with the flyers attached to over 700 residences in Frankfort, Mokena, and Joliet. They collected the donations and brought them to My Joyful Heart's ministry center, but their hard work didn't end there. The Junior Board spent hours sorting the food to prepare the

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items for inclusion in the agency's next Gift Event. Five times a year, My Joyful Heart provides gift bags containing life's basic necessities to over 800 local needy children enrolled in the program.

"I'm glad that the Summer Gift Event will include food for these children who have so little," Carroll said. "It's

incredible and touching to watch kids helping kids and I'm so thankful to the Junior Board and to all the donors," she added.

My Joyful Heart is a unique charity that provides personalized assistance and encouragement for children in need throughout Chicagoland. As a faith-based organization, My Joyful Heart endeavors to be a positive influence to children in need by remembering them with

basic life essentials, school supplies, clothing, toys, and encouragement throughout each year. By providing these gifts on a regular basis they extend love and hope to these children, making them feel special and letting them know that people do care.

My Joyful Heart's mission is nurturing disadvantaged children with the love of Jesus Christ by providing life's essentials so they thrive.