Plymouth area need is great for Children’s Holiday Fund

By David Kindy dkindy@wickedlocal.com

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The need is always there, but it is even more apparent during the year-end holidays. Once again, the Children’s Holiday Fund will bring joy and happiness to kids around the Plymouth area by providing gifts and warm clothing.

“People are so incredibly generous with the Children’s Holiday Fund,” said Sue Giovanetti, CEO of the Plymouth Area Coalition of the Homeless, which administers the program, with support from the Old Colony Memorial. “It’s impressive how the community wraps themselves around this cause.”

Since 1979, the fund has helped brighten the holidays for countless children. It was started by the late Phyllis Hughes, then publisher of the Old Colony Memorial and other regional newspapers, to fill a need in the community. For her, it was important that all children be able to celebrate the year-end holidays no matter what their circumstances.
“Phyllis was a special person,” Giovanetti said. “She cared deeply about the Plymouth community.”

Planning is underway for this year’s Children’s Holiday Fund, which is marking its 40th anniversary. The deadline for submitting requests for gifts and warm clothing is Nov. 20. Parents need to fill out an application form for each child 18 and under who will not be receiving presents because of financial circumstances.

In addition, now is the time for those in need to register for Holiday Meal Assistance. Qualifying families will receive a complete dinner with all the fixings. Last year, 225 area families received holiday meals. The deadline to apply this year is also Nov. 20.

Individuals and organizations can sign up to sponsor children and families for the holidays. They need to fill out an application and indicate if they want to support a child, children or a family by purchasing gifts and other necessities. Individuals and organizations can also hold toy drives and other events to aid families in the Plymouth area. That application deadline is Dec. 11.

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Last year, nearly 400 young people received gifts through the Children’s Holiday Fund. The Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless coordinates the giving and vets recipients through various public agencies. Community residents and businesses open their hearts and wallets in support of the annual effort.

Even children do their part to help youngsters in need. The Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra hosts the annual March of the Toys Parade during its two Holiday Pops! concerts. Children march with Santa throughout Memorial Hall with gifts they are donating to the Children’s Holiday Fund. This year, the concerts will be held at 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, and at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15. Visit www.plymouthphil.org for more information.

“Everyone deserves a happy holiday,” Giovanetti said. “Whether it is toys, clothes or gift cards, the local community is so incredibly generous in helping to ensure all children and families have something to celebrate. Phyllis would be proud.”

The late publisher will be remembered during the second annual Giving Tuesday Breakfast at Plymouth Yacht Club at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3. Gary Maestas will be honored with the Phyllis Hughes Award for Public Service. The Plymouth school superintendent will be recognized for his 11 years
of service to the community during the breakfast, which is presented by the Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless. Maestas will retire at the end of 2020.

For more information about the Children’s Holiday Fund, visit www.plymouthareacoalition.org/childrens-holiday-fund.