



Hayneedle Brings Warmth to Sandy Victims

February was busy as our staff coordinated the receipt and distribution 4,500 blankets donated by **Hayneedle, Inc.**, based in Omaha, NE, through its Gifts That Give Back collection. This timely gift of warmth was arranged through Hayneedle's collaboration with **The Children's Home Society of America** of which CHS of NJ is a member. **Susan O'Leary** and the Ocean Family Success Center team reached out to our partner agencies in impacted areas along the NJ shore to distribute blankets swiftly to those who need them. Over a dozen organizations including **Your Grandmother's Cupboard, Catholic Charities, O.C.E.A.N. Inc., Family Promise, The Salvation Army, Missionary Pentecostal Church, The Hope Center and St. Francis** picked up boxes for those they serve in the same hard-hit areas along the coast.

Hayneedle.com had launched its second annual Gifts That Give Back holiday collection in November 2012 with the goal of delivering thousands of warm blankets to children in need in the United States. Shortly after a discussion with the chair of The Children's Home Society of America, Sharon Osborne, and after hearing the reports of devastation left by

Hurricane Sandy, Hayneedle (in association with Pearl Mantels and other participating vendors) agreed that the best use of their blankets would be to designate them to families impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

"At Hayneedle, we are committed to positively impacting the communities we serve in any way possible," said **Doug Nielsen**, president and CEO, Hayneedle. "As families continue to struggle with the hurricane aftermath, donating all blankets to the affected families was an easy decision for our company and participating vendors. As temperatures continue to drop, we take comfort in knowing our collective donation will help families stay warm. We are proud that our Gifts That Give Back collection has expanded to include many generous partners and associations this year, as the donation nearly doubled since the prior year."

The blankets were delivered to **Meelheim's Transfer & Storage** warehouse in South Toms River on February 12th and 13th. Although the warehouse itself had been flooded with two feet of water and was still in the process of recovery, the owners generously agreed to accept all of the pallets and store them overnight. Having been notified in advance of their arrival,



President and CEO of CHS of NJ Donna Pressma; Program Coordinator of CHS of NJ's Ocean County Family Success Center Susan O'Leary; Fern Lumpkin; Ocean County Freeholder Joseph Vicari and Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, CHS of NJ's Director of Maternal/Child Health, Family and Community Support Services of CHS of NJ.

representatives from each organization were on hand to accept cases of blankets for the Sandy families and children they serve.

Also present during the distribution **Fern Lumpkin**, a parent participant at CHS of NJ's Ocean County Family Success Center who lost her home to Sandy. Lumpkin and her 17-month-old daughter had been living in shelters until just recently when they moved into a temporary home. Lumpkin accepted blankets for her family as a representative of all families who will receive blankets through this effort. When asked what the gift of warm blankets means to her, she wiped tears from her eyes and replied, "It shows me that people *do* care."

Donna Pressma, President and CEO of CHS of NJ, expressed her thanks and appreciation to Hayneedle, The Children's Home Society of America and to the brother-owners of Meelheim's Transfer & Storage, **Ron and Jeff Meelheim**, for use of their warehouse space. "This is one more wonderful example of how so many good people come together to help each other in times of devastating crisis," she said.



Above left: Representatives from various local partner agencies load their vehicles with blankets to be distributed to families affected by Hurricane Sandy. Above right: CHS of NJ's Family Success Center Program Coordinator Susan O'Leary, Fern Lumpkin, Ron and Jeff Meelheim, Freeholder Joseph Vicari and Maritza Raimundi-Petroski, Director of CHS of NJ's Maternal/Child Health, Family and Community Support Services, stand in front of storage site and boxes of warm blankets donated by Hayneedle, Inc. and its partner vendors.