



Mission Statement and History

It is the mission of Henrico Christmas Mother to provide assistance in the form of food, new clothing, books and toys to qualifying families, seniors, and disabled adults during the holiday season.

Our Beginning

Mitty McCraw (Mrs. George) Nelson, the first Henrico Christmas Mother, was a wife and a teacher active in the county's civic and social life. In 1942, a committee of local citizens committed to making sure that needy Henrico families received assistance at Christmas asked Mrs. Nelson to serve as the county's first Christmas Mother. The first year Mrs. Nelson involved her students in the effort by asking them to donate canned goods for the food baskets that were distributed along with clothing and toys.

A Continuing Tradition

The program remains much the same as it was in 1942. Henrico County Public Schools' students continue to be the source of non-perishable food items given to qualifying families in need, adults age 65 and older, and adults of all ages with a verified disability.

The majority of our program recipients apply for assistance and after interviewing with a Henrico Christmas Mother Council member and being approved are given a time and date to come to the warehouse to shop with the assistance of a volunteer. Note: In 2020, recipients received gift cards to purchase food and gifts because the Governor set restrictions that precluded the shopping experience.

The program is administered by the Henrico Christmas Mother Council composed of former Henrico Christmas Mothers and other community volunteers. The Council employs one part-time administrative staff member to assist with mailing and other routine operations. All other aspects of program management and delivery are performed by the volunteer Council members. In 1969, the program was granted 501(c)(3) non-profit status by the Internal Revenue Service. In 2018, the Henrico Christmas Mother became a "Virginia Nonstock Corporation" for charitable and educational purposes as detailed in the mission statement.

It is the donors and community volunteers who truly make the program possible. Hundreds of donors give generously so that we are able to purchase and provide clothing, books, toys, and other items. Hundreds more give of their time to organize the warehouse and shop with our recipients and/or organize businesses, civic groups, neighborhoods, churches and others to support the program. Henrico County employees organize under the direction of County Manager designated coordinators to hold fund raising events. Henrico County Public Schools and staff are one of our largest supporters.

Looking Forward

The Henrico Christmas Mother Council is committed to serve out Henrico neighbors in need during the holidays and meet the public expectations of transparency and good stewardship.

Mission statement as revised in Standing Rules dated 4/15/2019

