

# IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Probation and Parole agents leading collections for food, clothing, and other items in outreach projects**

JACKSON – Many families will have a Thanksgiving meal or clothing, toys, and other items this holiday season as a result of outreach projects of probation and parole agents and the individuals they supervise within the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Commissioner Pelicia E. Hall said she is proud of the employees for thinking of others. “I also commend those under our supervision who are helping our agents to serve others,” she said. “This kind of selfless spirit speaks highly of people who are thinking of others regardless of their own life circumstances.”

On Tuesday, agents with the Gulfport Probation and Parole Office delivered over 300 pounds of canned goods and about 30 hams and turkeys to the Gulf Coast Community Ministries donated with the help of 200 people on supervision. Another 300 pounds of donated canned goods went to the Knights of Columbus several weeks ago.

Probation and Parole Agent Troy A. Carpenter said the office has led the drive for four years, and thousands of pounds of canned goods, hams, and turkeys have been donated to local shelters and homeless assistance food programs.

“We have had a great response this year from everyone who participated. We pick one or two different shelters each year in our area to help spread as much as we can and be fair to everyone,” Carpenter said. “There has been a lot of excitement this year for this.”

Carpenter said the men and women on supervision make donations of their own motivation. “This is our service project that we do annually,” he said, noting that none of the donation have been from a commercial source. “We don’t have to ask our supervised people to participate. They look forward to it and are always asking when it will start. They see this as a chance to show they care about their community and they want to put positive feelings out to everyone.”

In Tishomingo County, agents and about 150 supervised individuals teamed with a local paper mill to help provide 25 packages of turkey dressing and all the fixings. Five baskets went to people under MDOC supervision who are in need.

“This is the first year for this particular donation but we have service projects in the community through the year,” said Probation and Parole Agent Shane Crowe. “We have received help from Families First, which is a group we work closely with in providing services to the people under our supervision. Everyone has worked together to make this a special holiday for those in need.”

Crowe added that last month, local churches and the Salvation Army contributed bikes to supervised people who had no transportation to reach the office for reporting requirements.

Last week, employees at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility donated six turkeys to the 16 WAPT Turkey Drive.

While some families are benefitting now, collections are underway for distributions later.

DeSoto and Forrest counties are participating in Toys for Tots drives this year. A box is located in the Forrest County P&P office for donations beginning the first week in December.

“Our people on supervision are not required to participate but they do so because they support the effort and we had a great turnout last year,” said Region 3 Area 3 Community Corrections Associate Director William “Ben” White in the Forrest County office.

Participants in the Hinds County Probation and Parole Office’s Thinking for a Change program plan to donate toys to the Blair E. Batson Children’s Hospital, said Agent Angela Harper. The collection will be given to two representatives at the Dec. 4 graduation, she said.

Washington County Probation and Parole Agent Joseph Chillis said that office maintains donations all year with great response. “We have it going year around where clients and agents donate through cleaning out closets and donating toys that our families have outgrown,” Chillis said. “We’ve been doing it for about a year and a half now.”

Count Probation and Parole offices in Union and Pontotoc counties also among those collecting canned goods. There is also a Clothing Corner in the Pontotoc P&P Office. Corrections Service Aide Pat Benjamin said a local Sunday school class provided three large boxes of canned goods and office members added hygiene and other food items. The office replenishes the food on a weekly basis. On some days, refrigerated items are available upon request, and the food and clothing distribution is expected to continue through December.

“We wanted to make a difference in the lives of those we see by providing some food and warm clothing,” Benjamin said. “We wanted to make everyone feel welcome to take what they needed so signs were posted to let clients know the items were available to them.”