



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Annual Holiday Giveback at YMCA Combines Fun with Community Service

180 Blessing Bags Assembled for Homeless in Chicago

Northbrook, IL: December 2019 – The second annual Holiday Giveback event was held on Saturday, December 7th at North Suburban YMCA. Over 175 volunteers of all ages participated in a project to create toiletry kits called “blessing bags” for those in need, while also enjoying holiday crafts, treats, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Each blessing bag included personal notes of encouragement and holiday messages created by the kids who participated. The bags, filled with personal toiletries, socks, deodorant, hand sanitizer, granola bars, and more will be distributed to [Project i Am](#), a Chicago-based organization that helps the homeless population. The event was organized by Tara Wesselink, the North Suburban YMCA’s head of Social Responsibility.

The Holiday Giveback event was sponsored by the [Illinois Bone and Joint Institute](#) (IBJI) and [Northwestern Medicine](#). [Sunset Foods](#) donated popcorn and the [Bach to Rock](#) music school provided holiday music. These companies have all been dedicated partners this year supporting the Y’s mission of a stronger community. In addition, many groups came out to volunteer including the Army Reserves, Girls Scouts of America, Covenant Living, and the Center for Enriched Living.

Volunteer and First Sergeant Randy Jalloway from the Army Reserves was happy to support the Y, stating that, “We had a few different non-profits we could have supported today, but we chose the Y because of all the amazing things it does for families. Being here is truly a humbling experience and giving back to people in need, like the homeless, reminds all of us how important it is to give during the holidays and all year round.”

“It makes me feel proud to be a part of helping people in need,” said volunteer 9-year-old Beckett McGovern, “The Y is a special place for me to have fun and go to camp, but also give back.”

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2018/19, the North Suburban YMCA provides individuals in Northbrook and 15 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help them become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at [NSYMCA.org](#).



Photo Caption: Magdalena Mikhael, age 9 (left) of the Northbrook Girl Scouts Troop and volunteers of all ages helped pack toiletry kits called "Blessing Bags" for the homeless at the North Suburban YMCA's 2nd Annual Holiday Giveback.



Photo Caption: Volunteers at the North Suburban YMCA's Holiday Giveback enjoyed visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, along with holiday treats and activities.