



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**
2705 Techny Road
Northbrook, IL 60062
www.nsymca.org

For More Information Contact:

Kim Nyren
knyren@nsymca.org
847-272-7250

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NSYMCA Celebrates the Season with their Annual Giveback Event
Volunteers come together to make "Blessing Bags" for people experiencing homelessness**

Northbrook, IL: December 2024 – In its 7th year, the North Suburban YMCA Holiday Giveback event was held on December 7th and drew over 100 volunteers of all ages to help create “Blessing Bags” for people experiencing homelessness.

Hosted by the NSYMCA Social Responsibility Committee, over 200 blessing bags were created and filled with essential items such as water bottles, socks, washcloths, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant and other toiletries. Volunteers made homemade holiday cards carefully crafted bringing a personal touch to each blessing bag.

The bags were immediately distributed that night to the Olive Branch Shelter in Chicago through another non-profit organization, [Project I Am](#), a Chicago-based charity started by Jahkil Jackson in 2016 at the age of 8. Jackson, now 16 years old, also attended the event with his family.

“We always feel so humbled by this event, especially when we see so many families from children to grandparents come out to support,” exclaimed Kim Nyren, Director of Community Investment and Events. “Now in our 7th year, we have made over 2000+ blessing bags over the years and hope to continue this work thanks to supporters in our community.”

“This is my second year volunteering for the Holiday Giveback,” said Madi Murphy, 8th grader at the Northbrook Junior High. “Events like this one help me and my friends with our volunteer service hours and I love volunteering, because it makes me feel good to help others in our community.”

Glenview residents and Y members, the Mercado Family participated with mom, dad, children and grandmother. “I love the Y events because they welcome all and encourage any age to participate, which is important to us and to our community,” stated Jessica Mercado. “My kids have learned a lot from the Y and from events like this one,” continues Mercado. “Thanks to the Y, it has encouraged my kids to do other volunteer events in our community too.”

Most of the donations came direct from the community including Y members, Y board members, local businesses and healthcare companies. The event sponsors included Allstate, Illinois Bone and Joint Institute, UBS Financial Services and Wintrust Community Banks.

The next Community Giveback event is the Y’s Annual Pet Blanket Event called *Fleece for Fur Babies*, and will be held on March 9th at the NSYMCA. Open to the community, the giveback seeks donations for new, unopened pet supplies. At the event, families can attend and make tie-fleece blankets for animals at local shelters. The event does require families to bring their own fleece and scissors. For more information [CLICK HERE](#) or visit nsymca.org.

If you are interested in joining a committee at the NSYMCA or learn more about their volunteer events, please contact Karen Brownlee at kbrownlee@nsymca.org or visit nsymca.org.

To help by making a monetary donation please visit NSYMCA.org or [CLICK HERE](#) or call 847-272-7250.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

The North Suburban YMCA services Northbrook and 14 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents 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 501(c)3 charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.

About [Project I am](#)

Project I am is a non-profit organization that helps families and people experiencing homelessness. *Project I am* was started in 2016 by Jahkil Naem Jackson, now 16 years old, was named one of the most influential people of 2017 by President Barrack Obama and has been recognized by numerous corporations and organizations like Disney, CNN and Marvel as a hero and youth ambassador of philanthropy and influence.



Caption: With over 100 volunteers, participants of all ages pack blessing bags for the homeless at their annual Holiday Giveback at the North Suburban YMCA on Dec 7th.



Caption: Geeta Chennareddy and her daughter Lara, age 7 help pack blessing bags at the North Suburban YMCA's 7th Annual Holiday Giveback event on December 7th.



Caption: The Mercado Family, Glenview residents and Y members, came together to help with the multigenerational event, the NSYMCA 7th Annual Holiday Giveback. Jessica Mercado, Madelyn Mercado, Zeke Mercado, Jaiden Wilkinson, Rupert Mercado and Matt Wilkinson.



Caption: Amanda Fielding, Age 14, Madi Murphy, age 13, Quinn O'Malley, pack blessing bags at the NSYMCA for their volunteer service hours.



Caption: Jahkil Jackson founder of "Project I am" and his family attended the event and helped pack over 200 blessing bags at the NSYMCA Holiday Giveback on Dec 7th.



Caption: Jeremiah and Miles, Northbrook residents and Y summer campers help pack blessing bags for the homeless at the NSYMCA Holiday Giveback on Dec 7th.



Caption: (Left to Right) Jahkil Jackson founder of "Project I am", Quinn O'Malley, Madi Murphy, Kim Nyren, Director of Community Investment at the NSYMCA and Amanda Fielding.