

Lauren Rose Albert Foundation

May, 2005
Mother's Day
Gift Basket Delivery

Help for moms



Chris Hartline (left in top photo) and Susan Rose load a van for the Mothers Matter gift basket program. This year, more than 1,200 baskets are expected to be delivered by today, Mother's Day. Rose (at right in 2003) founded Mothers Matter in 2001. "Our foundation has always been about trying to find a focus where there is a need, where we can make a difference," she says.

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CHERRY HILL

Two years ago, a Collingswood woman who was the beneficiary of a Mothers Matter gift basket met the people who sent it to her.

She thanked them for the much-needed soap, shampoo, stockings and other items in the basket, which she received on Mother's Day the year before. But one item she found luxurious: a lotion she wanted to keep forever.

"She just took a little bit each day to make it last," said Susan Rose, founder of the Lauren Rose Albert Foundation, which started the Mothers

Matter gift basket program for needy mothers in 2001. "We were standing there crying. We just wanted to make a little bit of a difference. We knew with this woman, we did."

That first year, the goal was 100 baskets of health and beauty-care products to moms at day-care centers, shelters, hospitals and "individual special moms." They ended up delivering 260. By 2004, the total topped 1,100. This year, more than 1,200 baskets are expected to be delivered by today, Mother's Day.

The effort was born of tragedy. Lauren Rose Albert, a South Jersey mother of three and Rose's daughter, died in a car crash while on a family va-

cation overseas in 1999.

Six years later, the foundation named in her honor also provides scholarships for five area colleges and holds a golf tournament and auction at the Tavistock Country Club.

"It's growing every year," said Don Colanero, a family friend and neighbor of the Roses and a foundation volunteer. "You meet so many wonderful people in this little business — people who give, not people who take."

Rose, with short, silver hair and a ready smile, sported a dark fleece pull-over that featured the foundation's logo: a pink rose with the words. "A legacy of love, laughter and light."

She exuded a quiet en-

ergy on Thursday morning, as volunteers started to move baskets, lined up in supermarket-like lanes, out of the spacious office lent to them by the Camden County Democratic Committee at the Garden State Pavilions in Cherry Hill.

"Our foundation has always been about trying to find a focus where there is a need, where we can make a difference," she said.

The foundation's ambitions continue to grow. This year, every basket has a survey attached to it, to be filled out by mothers voluntarily and anonymously.

It asks basic demographic questions about the mothers and their chil-

dren, but wants to know if recipients have a car, and, if so, what they need most in maintaining the vehicle. It seeks information on cell phones, bank accounts, smoke detectors and more.

"It's going to help us in terms of expanding into new programs, so it's really exciting," Rose said.

Louisa Tilsner, a part-time retail worker at Bath & Body Works (which contributes to Mothers Matter) and a Cherry Hill substitute teacher, took the week off to help.

"Seeing those mothers' faces... it's just the right thing to do," she said.

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