

Mothers Matter charity donates thousands of gift bags to moms in need for Mother's Day

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CaffreyStudents at the Paulsboro Head Start smile as they check out the gift bags, donated by Mothers Matter, that they will give to their moms for Mother's Day.

This Mother's Day, thousands of moms across South Jersey will have a special treat waiting for them on Sunday, courtesy of the Lauren Rose Albert Foundation's **Mothers Matter program**.

While the mothers — who may be dealing with their children's hospitalization, difficult family issues or just trying to make ends meet — appreciate the gift bags chock full of beauty products and toiletries, they're mostly taken aback by what the gifts mean — Thank you.

This year, **the Mothers Matter volunteers**—who **rent out the old public works building** in **Washington Township** to do their good works—will deliver nearly 2,000 gift bags to deserving mothers.

“Since we began in 2001, we started this program as a way to help moms who are facing challenges,” said President and Founder of the Lauren Rose Albert Foundation, Susan Rose.

“Maybe with the economy they can’t afford or don’t have the money for women’s personal care or beauty products. Maybe they’re with an ill child, alone in a nursing home or don’t have the time or energy to buy these products.” All of the products are collected through community and corporate donations.

They deliver the baskets—they’ll be delivering their 20,000 gift bag to-date at the Ronald McDonald House in Camden on Saturday—to daycares, nursing homes and anywhere there are mothers who could use a pick-me-up, a thank you for all of their selfless dedication.

On Wednesday, the foundation delivered 50 of these gift bags to the Paulsboro HeadStart preschool for the students to give to their own hardworking mothers.

Lauren Rose Albert Volunteer and Assemblyman Paul Moriarity of Washington Township and Volunteer Betty Bartkovsky delivered the gifts to the school, as the three and four-year-olds looked on with wide eyes and pride.

Many excited calls of “I’m going to give my mom this one!” and “I’m going to give my mom a brush!” spoke to the eagerness of both the volunteers and the students to give moms something special this weekend.

“It’s just nice to say to moms, ‘You matter,’” Moriarty said. “Some might not normally even get a gift.”

Seeing the children’s excitement at being able to put a smile on their mothers face makes it all worth it to Bartkovsky.

“I love doing it. Especially when the kids say things like, ‘Oh it smells so good.’ One little boy asked ‘Is there nail polish in it for mommy? It’s very touching,” Bartkovsky said.

Students from Bankbridge Special Services schools came in to help put the baskets together for this weekend’s deliveries.

Year-round, they deliver gift bags to mothers who are staying with their children while they’re treated at area hospitals such as Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

“No one thinks of the moms who are there, and we do,” Rose said.

The Mothers Matter program is just one of many initiatives the foundation has started to help women in the community, but it’s one that speaks to the very core of the foundation. Rose started the foundation after losing her daughter, Lauren, in a car accident while she was on vacation in Morocco. Lauren was a mother of three, and Rose said that this kind of program is exactly what her daughter was about.

“We carry that with us,” Rose said. “When we do this, she’s with us.” She said running the foundation and these programs helped her heal from the tragic loss and has now given her a sense of resolution and peace.

“The first few years, it really kept me going,” Rose said. “And now I’ve found peace. Somewhere along the way I’ve found such peace, and now joy.”

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