

Non-Profit Charity Recycles Furniture To Give To Others

By Henry M. Holden

Giving is trending this time of year, whether its donating food for food pantries, turkey dinners, toys for the holidays.

Many may not know about the free furniture available for those in need as well.

Interfaith Furnishings is an interdenominational non-profit charity, located in Randolph. It provides home furnishings for those in need by providing donated furniture to Morris County families at no charge. The furniture donations come from the Morris County community at large.

Interfaith Furnishings is supported by local businesses that have donated

space and resources. The organization receives no government funding and has volunteers pick up furniture donations, store them in the warehouse, and deliver them to families.

Interfaith Furnishings was recognized by the White House in 2010 for its efforts in helping provide furniture to more than 700 needy families in Morris County. Since then, the number has grown to 1,288 families with many having multiple rooms furnished.

Joshua DuBois, then special assistant to President Barack Obama, and executive director of The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, highlighted the charity's work.

DuBois blogged that

his office keeps in mind the small groups "making a major impact in their communities like Interfaith Furnishings, as we seek to pair the resources, with the expertise, and information from the federal government with the passion and action that are ever-present in our neighborhoods.

"The organization was founded in 2004 to help families cope with the lack of financial aid for essential furniture such as couches, chairs, and tables," he wrote. "It does all this work as a donation-based program that operates with the help of the social service organizations and local houses of worship in Morris County exclusively.

"Interfaith Furnishings faced a continuing chal-

lenge over the years," said Mary Jo Welch, co-director of Interfaith Furnishings.

"The organization has moved from building to building six times in 11 years, occupying donated space until it is needed for another purpose."

Welch would love to settle in a permanent place, but says she must be realistic: the organization, which she said gets no income other than donations that help pay for insurance costs and utilities, cannot afford to pay rent.

She'd love to find a benefactor willing to pay rent for a permanent space, but realizes that may be hard to come by.

The organization recently moved into a new home.

"I think it is as perma-



Volunteers from the Islamic Center of Morris County. Photo by Christopher Welch.

nent as it can be," said Welch. "The new location is Christ Church in Rockaway. They don't use all their property so they are allowing us to use this warehouse. It is huge, and this is without a doubt the best space we've ever had. We have this property until

they decide to build a cathedral.

"Christ Church has to pay taxes on everything that is not church related," said Welch. "So, we are using a portion of that property. When we come in as a charity we take some of

continued on page 15

Like us on facebook www.facebook.com/mypaperonline.com

Non-Profit Charity Recycles Furniture...

continued from page 13
that off the tax rolls."

As far as diversity of service, Welch said "We're not limited, we work with any of the social service agencies, there are more than 20, and any faith-based organization in Morris County," said Welch.

"We don't ask for outside money," Welch continued. "Hopefully there will be people out there who will contact us to ask us how they can help. Our idea is this should be done all over the country — it can easily be done.

"The most important thing you should know is that we never sell the furniture," she added. "We asked for a donation of \$20

from the people donating the furniture. And we asked for nothing from the people receiving the furniture.

"Once a year we appeal the churches," Welch said. "We asked them for donation of \$250 to \$300, depending on their size. We provide lunch for the volunteers when they are working, and Marty's Rent-A-Wreck gives us a deal on the truck, and we are most grateful to them. One nice thing about this job is we get to know people from all the different faith-based backgrounds who work with us."

The organization rotates the pickup and deliveries among the participating faith-based groups. The next pickup date is Jan-

uary 20, with volunteers from The Islamic Center of Morris County, St. Andrew Orthodox Church, and the Hope Presbyterian Church.

Donations are strictly limited to medium-sized furniture, such as sofas, love seats, chairs, end tables, coffee tables, dinette sets, and bookcases. No trundle beds, no convertible beds, no white upholstered furniture, no entertainment centers, no oversized desks, no mirrors, no furniture with glass, no electronics, no appliances and no household goods.

For information on how to help Interfaith Furnishings, call 973-361-1666 or visit www.interfaithfurnishings.org.