



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mayor Jacobs to Deliver Check, Food to Love Kitchen on 35th Anniversary

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— To celebrate its 35th anniversary on Friday, Feb. 12, The Love Kitchen will accept from Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs the canned goods and a check for the funds collected during the recent Holiday Festival of Lights at the Cove. They will also get a passenger/cargo van from Rusty Wallace Nissan.

The event will take place at 11 a.m. at the Nissan dealership, 4515 Clinton Highway. The media and public are welcome.

This year's festival of lights set a record for non-perishable food items donated – enough to fill 16 barrels. A total of \$7,428.49 also was donated. The 22nd annual event ran almost the entire month of December. Last year's festival, which set the previous record, raised \$7,677 and collected 12 barrels of food.

Patrick Riggins, executive director of the Love Kitchen, said he was proud of the public's donations to help the organization and that the new van – which will replace a Kia van the company donated a decade ago – will allow the Love Kitchen to haul more meals.

“The Love Kitchen has a long history of service in Knox County,” said Riggins. “The support we receive from the community—both from individuals and businesses—is what continues to make it possible.”

“In the year of COVID-19 a lot of things changed, but not this,” said Mayor Jacobs. “The Festival of Lights is an incredible community tradition, and the Love Kitchen is a great organization. I'm grateful for the generous contributions from so many who were able to enjoy it and help out.”

Each year, Knox County donates the money and food collected from the festival of lights to the Love Kitchen, which provides meals, clothing, and emergency food packages for the homebound, homeless and unemployed.

The Love Kitchen is celebrating the 35th anniversary of a charitable movement that started in a small church on Valentine's Day in 1986 when twin sisters Helen Ashe and Ellen Turner served 22 meals to those in need. The two would go on to work tirelessly, feeding Knoxville's homeless and homebound. The Love Kitchen's all-volunteer team now serves more than 3,000 meals a week and delivers more than 80 percent of those meals to the elderly, disabled and homebound.

Ellen Turner passed away in April 2015 and Helen Ashe in February 2018.

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