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Governor Christie, First Lady Mary Pat Christie and Cabinet Members Kick-Off Second Annual Season of Service with Distribution of Thanksgiving Dinners to Communities Impacted by Hurricane Sandy

Wednesday, November 21, 2012

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Partnership with Lowe's and Boston Market Enables New Jersey Families to Maintain Holiday Traditions During Recovery and Rebuilding Period

Trenton, NJ - In the spirit of giving and community service, Governor Chris Christie, First Lady Mary Pat Christie and their children packaged and distributed Thanksgiving turkey dinners for New Jerseyans impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Lowe's, in cooperation with Boston Market, is providing 500 premade meals to each of the 22 New Jersey Lowe's locations in communities most affected by Sandy. In addition, 22 Cabinet members and agency heads supported the initiative by fanning out across the state to assist in the packaging and distribution efforts to residents in need.

Today's event kicks off the Christie Administration's second annual Season of Service. Last year, Cabinet members participated in approximately 60 events across the state -- from serving meals on wheels to shut-ins and helping to serve and stock food pantries to stuffing care packages for military service members overseas and holiday letter writing to troops abroad to collecting and delivering coats to homeless shelters.

"As we begin this holiday season, many of our residents are hurting, having endured great hardship and loss as a result of Hurricane Sandy," said Governor Christie. "But, we are all one New Jersey family. When one family member is in need, we are all there to help, no matter how great or how small. It's that commitment, resilience and generosity that make Mary Pat and I so proud of our state and our people.

"I also want to thank Lowe's and Boston Market for becoming such an integral part of our larger New Jersey family and for their tremendous support. These Thanksgiving dinners truly make a difference by helping our families maintain the traditions of the holiday season as they recover and rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy."

Cabinet members participating in the Lowe's Thanksgiving dinner distribution include: Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno (Bayonne); Transportation Commissioner Jim Simpson (East Brunswick); MVC Chief Administrator Ray Martinez (Eatontown); Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff (Hamilton); Attorney General Jeff Chiesa (Hamilton); Labor Commissioner Hal Wirths (Paterson); SDA CEO Marc Larkins (Howell); DOBI Acting Commissioner Ken Kobylowski (Holmdel); Corrections Commissioner Gary Lanigan (Marlboro); Health Commissioner Mary O'Dowd (West Windsor); Higher Education Secretary Rochelle Hendricks (West Windsor); Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez (Union); EDA CEO Michele Brown (Woodbridge); DCF Chief of Staff Barbara Rusen (Piscataway); HMFA Executive Director Anthony Marchetta (Piscataway); DEP Commissioner Bob Martin (Jersey City); NJ Transit Executive Director James Weinstein (E. Rutherford); Agriculture Secretary Doug Fisher (Millville); Homeland Security Director Ed Dickson (Union); Education Commissioner Chris Cerf (Paramus); Military and Veterans Affairs Brigadier General Michael Cuniff (Brick) and Military and Veterans Affairs General James Grant (Manahawkin).

In all, Lowe's is distributing the family-style meals at 35 Lowe's stores in areas hardest hit by Sandy in New York and New Jersey. With each meal serving about six people, Lowe's will provide enough Thanksgiving dinners to feed more than 136,000 people in impacted communities between the two states. More than \$1 million worth of food is being distributed.

"I recently had the opportunity to tour the area and see firsthand the tremendous loss suffered by so many families, including many of our own employees," said Robert A. Niblock, Lowe's Chairman, President and CEO. "We're doing everything we can to help these communities get back on their feet, and food is still a critical need for so many people. We hope these meals can bring a moment of comfort for families who are enduring so many difficulties this holiday season."

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While New Jersey remains in the recovery stage, helping New Jerseyans return as close to normalcy as quickly as possible, recovering from the devastation of Sandy will take much more time, resources, and assistance to families in need. Earlier this month, Governor Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie formed the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund to assist residents impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Those interested in learning more can visit www.SandyNJReliefFund.org or the address below:

Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund
PO Box 9
Mendham NJ 07945-0095
Email: info@sandynjrelieffund.org

Governor Christie has emphasized the importance of community service since his inaugural in 2010. Today, approximately 1.5 million New Jerseyans contribute about 170 million hours of service each year, bringing a positive influence to neighborhoods and communities throughout the Garden State through local groups, houses of worship and civic organizations.

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