

It is beginning to look a lot like Christmas, or at least it did last week. I am a back east girl and snow always stirs up memories of skating rinks and long treks in the winter wonderland of glistening snow. But no matter what the weather Christmas is coming in a few short weeks.

There is no doubt that this is a magical time for many people. Despite the usual dire predictions that people aren't spending any money in the stores this year or that we should do away with gifting altogether and get back to the true spirit (I always thought it was the spirit of giving), Christmas will carry on as usual. The problem is that "as usual" may not be that good for many children in our society. It is hard to think about what Christmas morning looks like in a family home that doesn't have heat, enough food, or warm clothes for the family to wear. Here at FRA we are privileged to meet and to offer support to many families in the community.

In case you don't know who we are, FRA is a non-profit community social services agency that has been serving District 69 for 23 years. We receive government funding to provide completely free programs to anyone who is need of our professional services. I don't usually use this column to talk about the Family Resource Centre but as we are preparing for the holiday season our conversations are turning more and more to the children, the youth, and the families whom we serve all year. Many of them are in need and it is our tradition at FRA to work behind the scenes to provide food and clothing, Christmas hampers, blankets and gifts to as many people as possible.

We regularly get donations of food and money from our local churches and grocery stores. Businesses call us to participate in their hamper programs and their gift distribution programs and we welcome any opportunity to do what we can. One thing you need to know about the people who work at FRA, they are dedicated caring individuals who chose to work at the community level to make a difference in the lives of people who live here.

If you have been reading this column from week to week, I hope you have been enjoying it and that you have been able to put some of the ideas to good use. This week I'd like to send out a reminder that this is the season of giving and I want to let you know that there are many organizations to which you can donate for Christmas including FRA.

I also invite you and your family to our Annual Open House at 181 Sunningdale Rd. W., Qualicum Beach on December 14th from 3:30 to 6:30. We are providing refreshments, quick

crafts, baking and lots of old fashioned Christmas cheer! Please call if you wish to donate money and/or goods for Christmas.

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