

# EAST BAY TIMES

## Friends of Oakley, Brentwood Community Chest help the needy



Freedom Leadership members Alberto Garcia, left, and Leilani Anonuevo wrap gifts for Friends of Oakley's Christmas basket program.

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As people storm local retailers in search of a good deal this Black Friday, two local organizations are hoping that they too will benefit from the shopping frenzy.

Both the Friends of Oakley and Brentwood Regional Community Chest rely on the generosity of locals to fill their Christmas Basket barrels with toys and nonperishable food. But with Thanksgiving so late in the month this year, it means they have one less week for collection.

"You know, it's always slow at the start of November as we start to get going ... our big fillers are the school districts, who really start to ramp up here, especially after Thanksgiving," said Dana Eaton, who serves as BRCC co-president with Kevin King. "We expect to see a big increase then."

Despite the slow start, Eaton is confident that community will come through.

#### **Confronting protests, Iran vows to strike back if US attacks**

"It always works out," he said. "But that doesn't mean we're not nervous about it as we're going through it."

FOO President Pat Anderson said her organization is also experiencing the same slow start at its collection barrels. But as far as the need out there, she said they have already registered 300 needy families, which is the maximum FOO can serve.

Anderson said, "We had this dredge of people the very first night — very hectic."

Eaton said that BRCC has also registered about 300 families so far, and expects to register another 250 families over the next couple of weeks.

So how can people help these two organizations?

Both organizations are in need of nonperishable foods and new unwrapped toys, which can be deposited in collection barrels located at local businesses, schools, banks and post offices in Oakley, Knightsen, Brentwood and Byron.

Eaton said when it comes to donations of nonperishables, "We always say, 'Try and pick something your family would enjoy, because chances are that there is another family that would enjoy the same thing.'"

As for toys, a gift of any toy is greatly appreciated, but both organizations said that they tend to be shy of gifts for the older kids.

"We serve infant to 18-year-olds in families, so especially anyone above 13 is the hardest, the one that we (BRCC) typically have to buy," Eaton said.

"There are lots of things that are great for those kids, you know anywhere from sports equipment — basketballs, footballs — to board games or games of older interests or book sets," Eaton added. "Things like that can help an older child have a better Christmas."

“We also have a great need for infants and toddlers and young kids and they’re really fun to buy for,” Eaton added.

Gift cards and monetary donations are also needed to purchase toys, turkeys and fruits and vegetables. Those types of donations can be mailed to FOO at 2063 Main St., #250, Oakley, CA 94561; and to BRCC at P.O. Box 845, Brentwood, CA 94513.

FOO is currently looking for volunteers to help wrap toys, pack toys and sort food (dates and times available online at [www.friendsofoakley.com](http://www.friendsofoakley.com)). Volunteers are also needed on Dec. 14 to help distribute turkeys, food boxes and toy sacks to registered families.

“As many (volunteers) as we can get,” Anderson said. “We just work until it’s done, then we clean it up, start it again.”

All FOO volunteer activities are scheduled to take place at Almond Grove Elementary (5000 Amaryllis St., Oakley).

BRCC also needs volunteers to help pack boxes Dec. 20 from 4-9 p.m. and to help distribute boxes and toys on Dec. 21 beginning at 7 a.m. at Brentwood Elementary (200 Griffith Lane, Brentwood).

For more information about BRCC, log onto [www.brcchest.org](http://www.brcchest.org). For more information on Friends of Oakley, visit its site at [www.friendsofoakley.com](http://www.friendsofoakley.com).

TO HELP

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