

# WHO WE ARE

## BIG HEARTS Always in Season for IBEW Members

IBEW brothers and sisters are hard-wired to do good, as they demonstrate every day in cities big and small throughout North America. Their help was needed more than ever in 2020, and they answered every call. Locals organized food drives, delivered meals to homes, sent boxed lunches to hospital workers, distributed masks and other PPE, and much more. When the winter holidays rolled around, their generosity only surged. Some locals broke their own records as they gathered mountains of groceries, toys and warm clothes. But every kindness, no matter the scope, made a difference to people in need, and that embodies the spirit of our monthly “Who We Are” feature. We can only picture a few of the endless good deeds here, but we honor them all, and all of you who had a hand in carrying them out. ■



▲ East Windsor, N.J. Local 827 is split into six units statewide, and every one of them helped fill hearts and stomachs over the holidays. A few examples: At top left, Hudson Unit members prepare to deliver 12,000 pounds of food to two pantries in Paterson, including the Father English food bank. Its deeply grateful director, top right, said he’s gone from feeding 7,000 people a month to 42,000 during the pandemic. Bottom right: Central Unit members show off some of the toys they delivered in December; earlier, at left, members from Central’s Sub Unit 8 collected nearly 2,000 pounds of food within a week for the Monmouth Ocean food bank.



▲ The Apprentice Council at Lima, Ohio, Local 32, made TV news for its holiday season generosity, an annual tradition that usually includes two months of ticket sales for a 50-50 charity raffle. Social distancing put that on hold, but the apprentices carried on with their annual food drives that in 2020 benefited the city’s Veterans Food Pantry and Meals ‘til Monday, which helps feed children when school cafeterias are closed. Fourth-year apprentice and council chair Meredith Hall said they hope to sponsor an even larger charity drive this spring.



▲ Across Alaska, members of Anchorage-based Local 1547 made sure that COVID-19 restrictions wouldn’t get in the way of a happy holiday season for families in need. In Juneau, at left, members launched a food drive that quickly snowballed community-wide, benefiting the Southeast Alaska Food Bank. At right: 18 hours south in Ketchikan, IBEW elves made special deliveries to children’s homes on Dec. 12, gifts that members normally distribute at a holiday party. In a colorful ad inviting families to schedule a visit, they said, “COVID-19 can’t keep Santa away!”



▲ Members of Windsor, Ontario, Local 773, help feed people in need year-round, including a Christmas lunch at a local eatery, Mezzo Ristorante. Lacking space for social distancing, the 2020 event was nearly canceled. But Business Manager Karl Lovett had an idea: Make the food at Mezzo and serve it at the city’s mission. Despite a smaller crew due to COVID-19, Lovett (at left, with Mezzo owner Filip Rocca) said they still managed to serve hot chicken meals with all the trimmings to about 25 people at a time. Others received meal boxes to go. Volunteers also gave away stuffed reindeers at the mission and local pediatric wards. In a radio interview, Lovett said, “When you belong to a great union you have that feeling of giving back. My members are always asking how they can help.”



▲ Boston Local 103 members delivered holiday cheer and warmth to their community, amassing mountains of toys as part of a citywide drive, as well as winter clothes for adults and children in need. The women’s committee manages the latter project, collecting hats, scarves, gloves, jackets and other winter attire for women’s shelters. In 2020, “needs seemed to be escalated for both toys and clothing,” Business Manager Lou Antonellis said. “Our members once again stepped up and delivered.”