



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Angel Project Brings Holiday Cheer to 162 Grandparents Who Are Primary Caregivers to Grandkids

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**Yonkers, NY-** Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Angel Project will bring holiday gifts this week to 162 grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their

grandchildren. The gifts have been purchased and donated by generous “Angels” who have fulfilled the grandparents’ wishlists.

The Senator created the annual “Angel Project” six years ago to bring holiday cheer to grandparents who care for their grandchildren. While there are a number of organizations focused on making sure children have toys for the holidays, she found there were none focused on the caregivers, who often don't have anything to open. The grandparents often take on the role of caregiver to keep the children out of foster care. Most are on fixed incomes and think of the children before they think of themselves.

The “Angels” are caring individuals who wanted to participate in the project. All bought gifts for the grandparents they were matched with.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “I call it the Angel Project because I am asking people to do a little something for someone they do not even know, who they probably will never meet, but whose life will be changed by their generosity. Many of these families do not want to lose a child to the foster care system and the grandparents often become the primary parent for this reason. They sacrifice so much for their grandchildren. The Angel Project is our way of ensuring they are not overlooked during the holidays.”

Partnering with the Senator are Family Service Society of Yonkers, Family Ties of Westchester, New Rochelle Housing Authority, Westchester County Department of Social Services, and the YWCA of Yonkers. These agencies identify the grandparents they work with and will deliver the gifts to them in time for the holidays.

Normally, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins hosts a luncheon for grandparents to meet their “Angels” and exchange gifts, but due to the ongoing pandemic, it had to be canceled again this year. To ensure gift delivery was safe, the Senate Majority Leader asked

“Angels” to send gifts to the Senate office where her staff wrapped the presents for area nonprofits and religious organizations to pick up by appointment and deliver to families in need.

Charlie Knight, CEO of the YWCA of Yonkers said, “The YWCA of Yonkers appreciates and thanks Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her exemplary work and dedication in uplifting the community during this time of need. The Angel Project creates a sense of joy, generosity, happiness and inspiration to all during this holiday season.”

Carolyn Fluckinger, Director of the Kinship Support Program for Family Service Society of Yonkers said, “Senator Stewart-Cousins has demonstrated care and concern for grandparent and kinship caregivers raising children for many years, first as a Westchester County Legislator and now as the Senate Majority Leader. The caregivers who participate in the Angel Project through Family Service Society of Yonkers feel the sacrifices they have made to keep their families together are recognized by the Senator and the community.”

“Angel” Claudia S. Lee said, “It's been my sincere honor to participate in Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins' Angel Project. My Church, North Yonkers Community Church, and I have contributed to this project since the beginning. And every year, we look forward to recognizing grandparents that make sacrifices for their grandchildren.”

Grandparent Felisha Dixon said, “I feel great. There have been so many times since the girls came to me that I have not been able to get anything for myself. It is easy for me to speak from the heart in this situation.”

Grandparent Margaret Greer said, “This project is very special. I still have the coat I received last year. I cannot go out and shop for myself now that I have my granddaughter.”

Grandparent Rita Livingston said, “I think it is a beautiful thing they are doing. It is a great project and has been very helpful for me.”

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “It’s heart-warming to see how many people want to give back even during the holidays, despite the difficulties posed by the ongoing pandemic. The organizations partnering with us are ensuring the delivery of these presents in time for Christmas. We thank them for serving our most vulnerable during these challenging times, and always going above and beyond to help residents.”