



1) Mom Cassandra, son Sebastien, 7, with Gateway employee Jamie.



Gateway worker TJ with peanut butter and nicely put together PB & J boxes for clients.



Michandra picks up wrapping paper and bows from volunteer Amanda.



Gateway volunteers Danielle and Amanda stand ready to help by table full of presents and real tree

## Gateway Community Outreach "Angel Tree" & "Special Touch 2017"

By Diane Emeott

Seven-year-old Sebastien was hoping for a toy car for Christmas. He and his mom Cassandra stopped by Gateway Community Outreach in Deerfield Beach the Monday morning of Dec. 18 to pick up one of the wrapped gifts donated by Zion Lutheran Church. Some 60 kids received Angel Tree gifts that day. Two bikes were located in the Angel Tree room, as well as a plate full of cookies. Before clients arrived, Michandra got two rolls of wrapping paper and bows on her way upstairs.

Mekta was picking up gifts for her 9-year-old girl and 14-year-old boy. She also has an 18-year-old daughter, she said. This was Mekta's first year at the Angel Tree.

"I didn't even know they did

this. I got a letter in the mail [telling about it]," she said.

The next day, Tuesday, Dec. 19, at Gateway's Special Touch 2017 event, unwrapped toys were given out, along with peanut butter and jelly boxes, pillow pals and school supplies for more than 200 to 300 children, according to Denise Chavez of Gateway. Area businesses contributing Christmas toys included the following: Astronics DME, Craft Construction, CSPI, Gold Coast Quilt Guild — the pillow pals, Javita International Ltd., Kamm Consulting, Laura Sanders/ReMax In Motion, Mack Mack & Waltz Insurance Group Inc., Roig Lawyers, Spirit of Giving Network, Stitch Craft, Tina Bivona/TDL Centers and TJ Maxx — with 12 stores in the local area from Miami to Boca Raton.

Gateway Community Outreach responds to the specific needs of preventing homelessness, assisting more than 35,000 clients yearly with a staff of four and almost 300 volunteers — serving Broward and Palm Beach counties.

Their mission is to safeguard and protect the most vulnerable community members by providing food, housing assistance, referrals and intensive case management to those in need of emergency aid. They offer hope and compassion in times of personal crisis, treating clients with dignity and respect, with a goal of helping clients reach self-sufficiency.

"We take care of 4,000 clients in Deerfield Beach," said CEO/President of Gateway Carol Ray, who founded the social services non-profit 22

years ago, with a can of corn. One of Gateway's eight food satellites operates out of The Church at Deerfield Beach (formerly First Baptist Church), 701 NE 2 St./Eller St. every Friday from 9 to 11 a.m. Ray added that the Friday feeding at The Church at Deerfield

Beach is open to residents of The Palms and others. "People go in, show their ID and register for emergency food. The intake is done there, and the files are sent here once they register," explained Ray. "When we receive the files, our case managers provide

case management and put the client on our 90-day Treatment Plan," continued Chavez.

For more information about Gateway, visit [www.gcoflorida.org](http://www.gcoflorida.org), email: [outreach@GCOFlorida.org](mailto:outreach@GCOFlorida.org) or call 954-725-8434.

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**Cross Community Church**  
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