

# Hyatt Regency, Target wrap Franciscan Center guests in warmth - one blanket at a time

**By Jennifer Williams**

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There may have been a light misting rain outside 101 W. 23rd St. in Baltimore Dec. 23, but inside the Franciscan Center, guests were enveloped in warmth and cheer as they received a hot meal, new toiletries and a new blanket.

This Christmas season, the Franciscan Center, which provides emergency assistance and supportive outreach to persons who are economically disadvantaged, was able to distribute 500 blankets to guests thanks to an initiative by Hyatt Regency Baltimore and Target on Boston Street.

After a meal that included ham with pineapple, mashed potatoes with gravy, broccoli and cheese casserole and a dessert with a candy cane, guests such as 62-year-old Anthony Jones walked away with a plush blanket and a bag of toiletries.

Jones, who stops by the Franciscan Center for a hot meal on his way to work at his contracting job, said he “thanks God” for the blanket as well as those “who took time out to give it.”

“The Franciscan Center is a very excellent set up,” said Jones, who was the first guest to receive a blanket. “They help people who need help with finances, and more need to be placed out there. Hats off to the volunteers.”

Hyatt Regency Baltimore came up with the idea to keep Charm City warm this winter and partnered with Target in Canton to help collect and donate 800 blankets to the Franciscan Center and the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training.

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Nadhalie Rytting, director of human resources at Hyatt Regency, said, “at Hyatt Regency, we believe taking care of the community we live in is extremely important - it’s our responsibility to take care of others.”

When asked how handing out blankets to guests puts her in the Christmas spirit personally, she choked up saying, “I think it’s fantastic.

“I have a lot of blessings and I want to make sure other people do, too, because I’m

lucky to have all that," she said. "Giving back is important. It makes you realize how lucky you are."

The Franciscan Center serves some 500-600 hot meals five days a week to clients from every zip code in Baltimore as well as offering clothing (including Attire for Hire), healthy food initiatives, emergency financial assistance and more.

"We're a one-stop shop for families and individuals in crisis," said Meg Ducey, director of development and marketing for the Franciscan Center. "The working poor may find themselves, toward the end of the month, making choices such as do I pay the electric bill or buy food. We help fill that gap and offer stability."

*To learn more about the Franciscan Center and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.fcbmore.org](http://www.fcbmore.org).*

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