



## ADOPT-A-FAMILY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: What is the Adopt-a-Family program?**

**A:** Compass Family Services' **Adopt-a-Family (AAF)** program pairs individuals or groups from the community with families who lack the resources to buy holiday gifts. For many of these families, these gifts are the only ones they will receive this holiday season.

### **Q: How does the program work?**

**A:** The Adopt-a-Family program matches individuals or a group of donors with a family/families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Donors provide gifts based on a wish list completed by the family. This year, we are offering two ways for donors to fulfill wish lists:

1. **Traditional Adopt-a-Family:** Fulfill a family wish list of needed and wanted items, shop, wrap gifts, and drop off gifts to Compass in early December to be distributed to your adopted family or families
2. **Gift Card Adopt-a-Family:** Fulfill wish list requests for gift cards from specific retailers for your adopted family or families and drop them off or send them to Compass in early December for distribution to your adopted family or families

### **Q: How are families chosen to be adopted?**

**A:** Families in the Adopt-a-Family program are families already accessing services within Compass Family Services' thirteen programs supporting families to secure housing stability, economic self-sufficiency, and family wellbeing.

### **Q: How many families get adopted each year?**

**A:** Last year, more than 550 families were adopted. We expect to serve approximately 600 this year.

### **Q: How can I participate?**

**A:** Register on our web site – <https://www.compass-sf.org/adopt-a-family>

### **Q: Is there a fee to participate?**

**A:** There is no fee. However, we strongly encourage donors to make a donation of \$150 per family adopted. Adopt-a-Family contributions help offset the significant cost of running the program and help

to ensure that our client families receive the full range of services they need throughout the year, not just during the holidays. All donations to Compass Family Services are tax-deductible.

**Q: How and when will I receive my family's wish list?**

**A:** Families will begin to fill out their wish lists in late September. Wish lists will continue to come in through December. We will begin to send wish lists to donors in mid-October. As soon as we receive a wish list that meets your specifications, we will email it to you.

**Q: How much are donors expected to spend on one family?**

**A:** Donors should expect to spend a minimum of \$300 on a family of two. However, donors are welcome to spend more. When you receive the family wish list, it will include required items as well as additional, optional items that you can choose to provide or not.

This year, specific requirements are:

- For each adult 18 years old and over – at least one gift card (\$100 minimum)
- For each child under 18 – three gifts (items listed on wish list will be from a variety of price ranges)
- One grocery gift card for the family of at least \$25 per family member. For example, a gift card for a family of four would be \$100

You are more than welcome to do more for your family if you choose to, but that is 100% optional. In addition to the gifts you purchase from the wish list, you may also optionally choose to include stockings for each family member to make the holiday feel more festive.

**Q. I was expecting a family in need to have basic necessities on their wish lists, but the children in the family I'm adopting have asked for electronic games and brand-name shoes. What should I make of this?**

**A:** Families living in poverty constantly do without, yet they live in a society that flaunts material wealth, brand names and luxury items at every turn. At Compass, we believe that a child without financial resources, and even an adult, has as much of a right to wish for a gift that is not a basic necessity as does their middle-class counterpart. At the same time, we work with each family to create a wish list that is realistic. Please remember that, as a donor, you do not have to fulfill all of a family's wishes. Sometimes children (and some parents) get carried away and ask for expensive items that may seem excessive, but remember it is the holidays and this is a wish list. Please do not be offended by this. ***Donors are NOT obligated to buy anything beyond the required items.***

**Q. Can I also donate gently used items to my adopted family?**

**A:** Please only include new items in your Adopt-a-Family contributions. However, if you have gently used items you'd like to contribute to Compass families, please contact In-Kind Donation Manager, Tony Hernandez, at [thernandez@compass-sf.org](mailto:thernandez@compass-sf.org). Tony will be happy to coordinate your donation.

**Q: What is the family ID number?**

**A:** Each wish list will have a unique number that identifies the family. It is extremely important to have **EVERY GIFT CLEARLY MARKED WITH THIS NUMBER**. It will help ensure that the right gifts get to the right family.

**The following frequently asked questions pertain only to Traditional Adopt-a-Family participants:**

**Q: How should I package and label the gifts?**

**A:** Please wrap and label **all** gifts. To ensure the gift cards for adults do not get lost, please put those in envelopes so they are not loose, and write the family ID number on each envelope. To make certain the right boxes get to the right families, it is extremely important to label each gift.

All of your gifts should be wrapped and placed inside boxes. All gifts should be labeled with the name of the recipient. **The box should be labelled with: 1) the family ID#, 2) the primary caregiver's name.** All of this information is provided on the wish list.

Once all of your gifts are wrapped and labeled, place them in boxes. Please label the boxes with the family ID number and list how many total boxes you have for the family. For example, label *1 of 2* or *1 of 4*, etc. If you have more than one family, please be sure to box each family's gifts separately.

Here is an example of how a box label:

FAMILY ID: \_\_\_\_\_

BOX \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY CAREGIVER: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPASS FAMILY SERVICES  
Giving. Helping. Hope.

**Q. What if I can't drop my gifts off during the designated time?**

**A:** Please make every effort to drop off your gifts during the allotted times (12/9-13). We will have volunteers and staff helping during drop-off to assist you with unloading. Families will start to receive their gifts the following week, so it is very important to drop off on time. There will be one Saturday drop off on 12/13 which is also the final date for drop-off. More information will be provided to you on specific times and days for gift drop-off as that time approaches.

**Q. How does the family receive the gifts?**

**A.** Most families will pick up their gifts at the storage facility location in San Francisco where you will drop the gifts off. Gifts for families at Compass Clara House are dropped off and stored at the program location and then given to the families before the holiday. In some circumstances, Compass' case managers will deliver the gifts to a family if the family is unable to get to us. All gifts will be given to families between December 15th – 20th.

**Q. I would like to meet the family I am adopting and take my children with me to drop off the gifts at their home. Is this possible?**

**A.** Compass Family Services ensures the confidentiality of each family receiving services. We absolutely do not make meeting a donor a pre-condition for participating in AAF. For many families, facing

circumstances where they are reliant on the kindness of strangers to provide holiday gifts for their children can elicit feelings of embarrassment and humiliation. On the other hand, there are some families that are happy to meet their donor, and are appreciative of the opportunity to convey their appreciation personally. If meeting the family you are adopting is important to you, please be sure to indicate this in your donor information form. We will do all we can to match you with a family that is open to a meeting.

**Q. Who do I contact if I have additional questions?**

**A.** Please contact our Adopt a Family team at [aaf@compass-sf.org](mailto:aaf@compass-sf.org)