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MEDIA RELEASE

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Local good causes spread joy this Christmas

The local community are rallying together to ensure that no child wakes up without a present to open this Christmas.

Lincolnshire Co-op's **Secret Santa** campaign will see **70 local charities** benefit from donations, including 43 food banks, 15 toiletry and sanitary appeals and 12 toy banks.

The campaign is a full community effort, with **over 50 local partners** including schools, community groups and businesses running Secret Santa collections.

Until the end of November, Lincolnshire Co-op's travel branches will be accepting gifts as part of its Travel's Toy Bank appeal.

Last Christmas, **4,562 gifts** were donated towards the appeal for vulnerable young people.

Inside travel branches, Christmas trees are being decorated with **gift tags displaying ages and genders of recipients**.

Customers are invited to select a tag, purchase an appropriate gift, and return it to the branch **unwrapped with the tag attached**. The gifts will then be collected and distributed by one of 12 local toy appeals.

Additionally, **£8,294.57** has been donated throughout the year by customers who booked a holiday with Lincolnshire Co-op. These funds will be donated as cash or used to buy gifts that'll be sent to charities.

Boxes of Hope CIC in Holbeach is one local toy appeal being supported through the Christmas campaign, linked with Lincolnshire Co-op's travel branch in **Spalding**.

Amanda Baxter, Managing Director at Boxes of Hope, set up the charity in **2022** during the Ukrainian war, helping to provide relief for families fleeing their homes.

Since then, the charity has collected enough donations to fill 30 18-tonne lorries and has expanded to support anyone who needs help locally, working with local organisations to provide practical and emotional support.

Amanda said: "Throughout the year, we stay in contact with the families we have supported with wellbeing check-ins, and in the lead up to Christmas many share concerns about managing the extra demands that come at this time of year.

"We do everything we can to help make the festive period memorable, including a trip to the local pantomime funded entirely by Boxes of Hope and providing Christmas treats and presents through donations made to us."

Local communities can also contribute by **donating food** into food stores or **hygiene items** into pharmacies.

Lincolnshire Co-op colleagues and teams will also be **volunteering** at donation drives and present wrapping events.

There will be lots of additional donation opportunities throughout the festive period, including at the Society's **Annual Members' Meeting** in December.

Football supporters can also donate at **Lincoln City**, **Peterborough United**, **Boston United** and **Scunthorpe United** throughout the entire campaign and selected home games.

Danielle Lowther, Lincolnshire Co-op Senior Community Co-ordinator, said: *"Christmas can be a difficult time for many people, but often the challenges someone is facing aren't always visible to those around them.*

"Our Secret Santa campaign is a simple way for our communities to come together, spread joy and help local families and individuals who may otherwise go without.

"We're proud to support charities doing so much to support people in need, and we're grateful to every member, customer and colleague who will get involved."

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CONTACT DETAILS NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Notes to editors:

1. **Lincolnshire Co-op** is an independent co-operative society. Its purpose is to bring together ideas, energy and resources to make life better in communities. It has around 300,000 members and 2,900 local colleagues in Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties and an elected board of directors who oversee the business. The society provides **valued services** and supports the **local economy** from outlets across its trading area including food stores, filling stations, post offices, travel branches, funeral homes, a florist, a crematorium and community libraries. It also cares for people's **health and wellbeing** through its pharmacies and support for a network of wellbeing walks. Local good causes benefit through its Community Champions scheme and together, colleagues and members also look after the **local**

environment through volunteering.

As well as its trading outlets, Lincolnshire Co-op owns properties, from flats and houses to commercial premises. The society brings land and buildings back into use to create attractive environments. With Lincolnshire Co-op as landlord, rents stay local and are invested in schemes that benefit the community.