**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact Person:** Wendy Thomas

**Company Name:** Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry (Outreach)

**Phone Number:** 828.894.2988

**Address:** P.O. Box 834, Columbus, NC 28722

**Email:** tbompolk1@windstream.net

**Website:** [**www.tboutreach.org**](http://www.tboutreach.org)

**Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry Holiday Program Serves Community**

On November 16, Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry (Outreach) will kick-off its Holiday Program by distributing 322 grocery cards for Thanksgiving meals to qualified families.

“It is hard to think about, but there are children and families in our community that need a compassionate hand during the holiday season or they would go without a holiday meal or a visit from Santa Claus," said Carol Newton, Executive Director of Outreach. "We are extremely grateful to our donors, volunteers and the community that supports this effort. Without their help we would simply not be able to continue the program.”

Outreach purchases gift cards from a local grocery store with funds donated to the nonprofit agency by community members. The gift cards are distributed by Outreach to families in need of a Thanksgiving or Christmas meal (alcohol and tobacco cannot be purchased with the card). “Eligibility is based on several factors including income -- which all Outreach clients meet since they are at or below the poverty level. This holiday season we are seeing a strong increase in the total number of families we serve. Between 20 and 30 families per month are new to Outreach, which provides a barometer of the impact that the economy has made on these families," commented Newton.

In addition to providing grocery cards for Thanksgiving and Christmas, Outreach “Angel Trees” will be distributed to families, businesses, churches and others who are interested in purchasing a gift for a needy child or senior citizen. The first name, age, gender, desired gifts and measurements of the "angel" are placed on a tree cut out of wood that is painted and decorated with paper angels. Multiple angels can be adopted by those wishing to purchase gifts. “To date, over 432 angels have been qualified and are in the process of being adopted,” said Michelle Reedy, Client Services Coordinator, "we fully expect this number to increase the closer we get to the Christmas holiday."

There is still time to participate in Outreach's Holiday Program. If you wish to adopt an angel this Christmas, sponsor a family's holiday meal or if you simply wish to make a donation to the Holiday Fund, please call 828-894-2988 or visit the Outreach office at 134 White Drive, Columbus, NC.

Angel Tree gifts should be dropped off at the 4-H center in Columbus from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m., Saturday, December 1.

staff/marketing/press releases/2012.thanksgiving program serves community.docx/