

<http://www.columbiamissourian.com/stories/2011/07/27/vac-picnic-advance/>

Columbia Missourian

Voluntary Action Center to hold 'Christmas in July' benefit

Wednesday, July 27, 2011 | 12:14 p.m. CDT

BY [Colleen Archibald](#)

COLUMBIA — Despite relentless heat advisories in Columbia and surrounding areas, it's "Christmas in July" for the [Voluntary Action Center](#).

The VAC is hosting the 20th annual event on Thursday. A meal of fried chicken, side dishes and ice cream sandwiches will be served, courtesy of Hy-Vee and Gerbes.

The event is held to give support to low-income families in Boone County and to let the community know that the VAC needs help to provide assistance for basic needs and emergency services.

Mail-in donations have already reached \$21,500, said Ron Schmidt, project director for the event. Last year, the event raised \$16,000, said Cindy Mustard, [who is retiring as the VAC's executive director](#).

"We want to raise awareness that there are needs all year long, not just at holiday times," Mustard said.

A raffle will be held, with a grand prize of a pass for two to the 2011-2012 season of [Columbia Entertainment Company](#).

Mustard said that for the first time, Christmas in July has a "presenting sponsor," Boone County National Bank. Between 300 and 400 families are expected to attend — and, in a special mid-summer appearance, Santa Claus will be there to hear what children want for Christmas and to hand out small presents.

What: Voluntary Action Center's "Christmas in July" fundraiser

When: 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday

Where: Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St.

Admission: Free. Optional \$10 for a single raffle ticket or \$75 for 10 tickets

For information: Contact Ron Schmidt at (573) 874-2273, ext. 203 or at projdir@vacmo.org.
