

Gift baskets reach those in need

By Chris Sykes Staff Writer, Orange Transcript 11/25/2009

St. Matthew African Methodist Episcopal Church on Oakwood Avenue was turkey and Thanksgiving basket giveaway central head quarters for a day on Saturday morning, five days before the official holiday.

Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. and the members of the Jaycees organization were among the numerous city and local area groups to lend a helping hand in advance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

"As mayor of Orange, one of my jobs is bring entities together for the betterment of our city. It was my pleasure facilitating an arrangement between the Orange Essex Jaycees and St. Mathews Church," Hawkins said. "In so doing, they were able to launch a very successful Turkey Give Away which will go a long way in contributing to a happy Thanksgiving for needy Orange residents. As president of the state Junior Chamber of Commerce, I commend the effort put forth by the Orange Essex Jaycees."

Jason Solowosky, the president of the Orange Essex Jaycees, said he agrees with the mayor.

"Part of the mission of the Orange Essex Jaycees is to provide service to Essex County communities," he said. "By giving approximately 100 turkeys to needy Orange and Irvington residents, a service has been provided."

"I have to remind my colleagues that we are called to be watchmen and we need to always speak out for people who cannot speak for themselves, because, in addition to making sure people get to heaven, we are also about bringing God's kingdom to pass on earth and, in order for that to happen, you have to stand for something," the Rev. Reginald Jackson said.

Sgt. Craig Epps of the East Orange Police Department's Kinsmen organization is also a member of the St. Matthew AME "family" and, because of that, he said he is very familiar with Jackson's "open door" policy.

"He puts his money where his mouth is, so to speak, when it comes to preaching the word of God and then acting it out in real life," he said.