



2024 Recipient ~ Stella O'Brien
Maria Regina High School

Team Happy Feet is an organization whose mission is to provide thermal socks to the homeless of New York City annually during the winter months. This began as a simple way of giving back to the less fortunate of the community in 2011 with the O'Brien Family. Siena, Stella, and the youngest sister Michaela, decided that instead of celebrating their birthday or receiving gifts during the year they would host a thermal sock drive in November. The sock drive allowed for their friends to attend and bring thermal socks. The socks are donated to the Aisling Irish Community Centers volunteer group who feed the homeless on a Monday night. Our thermal sock drive has been supplying these volunteers for the past 11 years. In the past five years as we have gotten older, we have started to visit the YWCA, a women's homeless shelter, in Yonkers on Christmas eve. We gift wrap thermal socks along with hats, gloves, and some Christmas treats. Team Happy Feet also gift wraps a supply of thermal socks to Father Brendan Fitzgerald of St Barnabas Church in Woodlawn. Fr. Brendan distributes the socks to the vulnerable in the Community. Team Happy Feet has written to BOMBAS who responded with two thousand pairs of socks to date. Bombas is an apparel brand that for every item purchased, a clothing item is donated to a homeless shelter or homelessness-related charity.

Team Happy Feet has modeled St. Vincent's mission of charity and most importantly the commitment to the community. What started out as 200 pairs of socks in 2011 has grown into a collection of 3,000 pairs of thermal socks in 2023. Collecting thermal socks has become a successful annual charity event that we hope to continue for years to come. Our Thanksgiving is our Socks Giving for our friends and community. The greatest joy in the world is knowing that our thermal socks will help a homeless person in some small way by keeping their feet warm.