

Testimonials - The DCF Olive Branch Shop



“Being able to get in the car and get groceries for my kids when they need it is something I didn't think I could do,” May-Williams said, explaining a fear of going out in public. “And here I am, and I get to do Christmas shopping. And I get to know that when my kids wake up on Christmas morning, it's because of the hard work that we all put in.”

- Ashley May Williams

The Olive Branch Shop is hosted by the Department of Children and Families. This shop offers a variety of new toys, gifts, school supplies, and handmade items that are donated by members of the community. The shop is open by appointment only and is housed in a donated space at St. Luke's Church in Glastonbury.

The mission of The Olive Branch Shop is to help DCF families by offering free items that may alleviate a burden or stressor in their lives.

I'm from Harford and thank you so much, you made me feel so much better. I was crying all morning terrified I wouldn't be able to give them a Christmas anymore. You are an angel.

- Anonymous Mother

The Olive Branch serves families with in-home service cases, [non-foster care], as well as our youth who are residing in group homes or independent living settings as well as birth parents who are actively engaged in the reunification process.

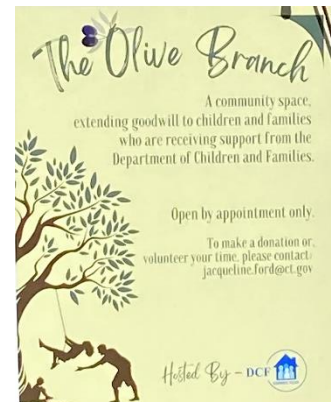


The Olive Branch first opened in December 2021 as a “pop-up” holiday shop and soon became a staple in the

Glastonbury community. The shop is open year-round to provide support for families being served by the department. Families are invited in to shop for birthday gifts, religious milestones, and other celebrations.

Jacqueline, just wanted to say thank you so much and how I appreciate you for helping me and my children this year. I don't know what I would of done without your help, I appreciate you so much!

- Chastity, Birth Mom





In 2021, it is estimated that fifty 50 families were served. In 2022, that number doubled to approximately 100 families. This year the Olive Branch relaunched in April 2023 to a permanent space and is open all year. The shop is on track to increase the number of families served by 30 percent which will bring us to an estimated 300 overall families and approximately 1,000+ children over the course of three years.

Since the inception of the Olive Branch, the department has collected approximately 5,000 new toys from community members, corporations, state agencies, public and private schools, colleges, rotary and civic clubs, government officials, financial institutions, former foster youth, and foster and adoptive parents.

The Olive Branch has served approximately 500 families which include one and two-parent households and approximately 1,500 children.



Good afternoon Lysa. It was such a pleasure to meet Jacqueline and see her view all that she is doing for families. The Olive Branch helped our family this holiday season. We found really fun Goods for the girls. Thank you.

-Noellie, Birth Mom



The family referral sources include: DCF, NAFI, CHR, Wheeler, the Interval House, and self-referrals from parents. Families from all six DCF regions have shopped at the Olive Branch. Families who lack adequate transportation have been supported by DCF's CTU Division, DCF staff, and private providers.

For more information including making a donation please contact Jacqueline.Ford@ct.gov