

Dear Rotary Club of Hamburg Members and Volunteers for Warm the Children:

From time to time, I've said that Hamburg's Warm The Children program is the best managed program in the country (there are 28 others), but I've never said why. Today, on the occasion of your Shopper Volunteer Recognition Breakfast, it seems like the perfect time to do so. There are two things that make your program Number #1; first, you solve problems quickly; then as a result of your problem-solving skills, you serve an extraordinary number of children.

What kind of problems have you faced?

- You lost the sponsoring newspaper where donations came from. Rotary member Earl Knauss saw an opportunity for the club to do what Rotary does, and Rotary took over managing the program by putting together a team headed by Liz Angelbeck, Tim Hoelscher and Barbara Stanley. They recruited an incredible core of dedicated, volunteer shoppers from the community, who return year after year to help families in need.**
- Without the sponsorship of the Hamburg Sun and changing readership habits, you couldn't depend on free advertising for fundraising. No problem for you; you found new and better sources of obtaining donations, including a very successful, past donor solicitation mailing and grant writing to secure contributions.**
- You've been forced to change store partnerships several times: Target closed all community charge accounts; You then switched to Sears, which went out of business after three years of shopping there. For the past several years, you've had a successful arrangement with Walmart, which has embraced the families who are part of your program.**

So that's why you're #1! Rotary Club of Hamburg members and your eighty volunteer shoppers give new meaning to WORKING SMART.

Congratulations and best wishes as you successfully embark on the 2024 program!

Sincerely, Mack Stewart, Founder, Warm the Children