

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered!

MJM Presents the FIRST Two Checks to Operation Round Up Grant Winners.

The first-ever MJM Electric Operation Round Up (ORU) Grant was awarded on August 19, 2021. The \$5,000 grant went to the Marine Toys for Tots out of Medora. This grant will assist the program in buying new, unwrapped toys and distribution to less fortunate children at Christmas. The primary goal of Marine Toys for Tots is, through the gift of a new toy, to help bring the joy of Christmas and send a message of hope. Webb Cunningham, a Member of MJM and applicant for the ORU Grant stated, "I was overjoyed with MJM implementing ORU. I immediately opted into this most worthwhile program."

Toys for Tots works primarily on donated money. Cunningham says, "This year, more than in previous years that our program has been in existence, will prove to be a significant challenge. There will be more demand for our help, which we will meet *and* accomplish!" Covid-19 is expected to have a huge impact on the need for assistance for families that before did not require assistance. In 2020, the Toys for Tots campaign based out of Macoupin County experienced an increase of 235 children. Cunningham expects this number to grow even higher by the end of 2021.

The picture to the right captures Communication and Member Service Coordinator Brooke Gross and ORU Grant Review Board Chairwoman Debbi Waters presenting a \$5,000 check to Cunningham.

On that same day, MJM was proud to give a check to Southside Church out of Litchfield for \$2,500. Since 2009, Southside Church has been distributing free school supplies to the community's children through their Education Station ministry event. The church invites Pre-K through 12th grade students to join the event. Due to the high attendance number the event sees each year, they cannot give every single item that a student needs, but does provide the necessary items to help every student.

Carrie Ernst of Litchfield saw on social media the advertisement for available ORU funds. The advertising came at a perfect time. "In recent years, we have been consistently giving school supplies to around 600-800 students, which is an increase from the early years of this ministry. However, the numbers dropped around 550 students in 2020. We feel this is because of the number of students who did remote learning," Ernst stated. However, they are preparing for whatever this new school year may throw at the students. Ernst continued by saying, "This ministry is not based on income and hardly any questions are asked. The only question we ask is what grade the student is going into so that we can assist them with the school supplies based on their needs. Our desire is to help bless the children and their families as much as we can."

Pictured to the left is Pastor Nathan Diveley, Carrie Ernst, Shannon Diveley, and ORU Grant Review Board Vice Chairwoman Valerie Belusko.

MJM Electric's Members voted in favor of implementing ORU at the Annual Meeting in March 2020. In this program, Members who choose to participate have their electric bills rounded up each month. The money raised (an average of \$6 per Member per year) is awarded through grants to non-for-profit 501(c)(3) groups and organizations in or near MJM's service territory. For more information about MJM Electric's Operation Round Up Program or to request more information, contact Gross at 217-707-6028 or visit www.mjmec.coop/operation-round.

