Wow...what a wonderful outpouring of support from many of our town residents for the Penfield Ecumenical Food Shelf. Over the last several weeks I have attempted to generate some additional donations of non-perishable food items and you rallied to the challenge. As you are reading this we will have taken in more than six cases of assorted fruits and vegetables and $500 to assist with holiday dinners. Penfield residents are so very caring and supportive of our community, I have the honor of seeing that each and every day of the week...thank you to everyone who participated, your generosity does make a difference in so many lives!

During my regular meeting with the Town Assessor this past week, I was informed that all exemption renewals have been mailed out to residents. While many of you have called or stopped in to the Assessor's Office to turn in information, I'm told returns have been slower than normal. Just a friendly reminder that enhanced STAR, senior citizen exemption renewals and any other exemptions are due back to the Assessor's Office no later than March 1, 2012. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the Assessor's Office at 340-8610 or log on to www.penfield.org, click on 'Departments' on the left hand column then choose 'Assessor's Office.' Please also note the Assessor's Office is located on the second floor of the Penfield Town Hall, 3100 Atlantic Avenue.

I had the pleasure of attending the Kids Miracle Making Club's (KMMClub) annual breakfast with Santa with my two granddaughters last week; what a wonderful time -- and more importantly, what a wonderful organization. The KMMClub is a service learning organization that celebrates the powerful belief that all children are by nature curious, talented, special and unique. Club programs help child volunteers build self-confidence by providing opportunities to use their talents and self-awareness to enhance the lives of other kids-kids with physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive challenges. I was honored to accept a plaque from the club on behalf of the entire Town of Penfield for our continued support of club members. Steve Pellow is the President of KMMClub and is a benchmark within our great community for helping kids; thank you Steve for all you do with your programs. To learn more about this wonderful club and its activities log on to www.kmmclub.org.

Here is the last week of tips from EAP of Rochester on how to beat holiday stress: "Ask for help" - if you are playing host, assign chores and duties to your spouse and children; "play to your strengths" - utilize what you have the most of...time, money, or creativity; "cut your costs" - give inexpensive but thoughtful gifts like home-baked goods or hand-made photo albums. Bundling several small items around a theme provides a low cost, personal touch. On behalf of the entire staff of the Town of Penfield, we want to wish all our residents Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa and a very special Holiday Season.

This Monday (Dec 19) the Shepherd Home will hold its first annual "Wings of Light" luminaria event to light up one of the longest nights of the year in celebration of the angels in our lives. Luminaries (small bags holding sand and a candle) will be lit all at once to create a glowing nighttime holiday display on the grounds of the Shepherd Home. Every luminary is personalized to honor or memorialize a friend or loved one. All proceeds will benefit the residents and caring work of the Shepherd Home. To learn more about the Shepherd Home and the wonderful work they do in our community, log on at www.shepherdhome.org.

I would like to close this column by extending a special thank you to Creative Gardeners of Penfield members Loretta Biller, Donna Guthrie, Grace Strong and Gail Trabalzi for beautifully decorating the Penfield Town Hall rotunda with wreaths, garlands, ribbons and more. Your work has been enjoyed by employees and the many residents that visit this time of year. Also, I would like to recognize Town Clerk Amy Steklof for the Hanukkah display in the rotunda.

Until next week, have a very enjoyable holiday with friends and family.

Tony
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