

# Laraway Project Provides Cheer to Local Families



Laraway's Backpack Program is preparing special holidays baskets for 22 local families served by the program. From fleece blankets, to chocolates, to educational toys, each basket contains a bit of holiday cheer.

"This is the 6th year of us creating holiday baskets," Backpack Program coordinator Nicole Plende observes. "We recognized a need among our families and saw the opportunity to collaborate with local businesses,

organizations and individuals who graciously donate items for the baskets.

Laraway staff deliver the baskets to individual family homes, a small gesture of sharing in this season of caring.

Laraway responds to the needs of at-risk kids and their families by offering innovative, strength-based services through alternative education, therapeutic foster care, and public school based support programs.

*Rowing in the News ☺*

# Community Meal Program Benefits from Generosity of JSC & Others

The Johnson Community Meal program served its 1,396th free meal at a special holiday gathering Wednesday, December 14. The program of free, biweekly meals is a collaborative effort of Johnson State College (JSC), the United Church of Johnson, and Laraway Youth & Family Services. All meals are graciously donated by JSC's dining-services provider, Aramark.

During 2011, guests of the meal offered \$688.73 in monetary donations. In this photo, Jess Leppert of Aramark hands the check to Johnson Food Shelf President Mary Bushnell while others (from left) - the Rev. Michael Ford, United Church of Johnson; Rick Aupperlee, School to Work coordinator at Laraway Youth & Family Services; James Consentino, head chef and assistant director of JSC Aramark; and Ellen Hill, director of experiential learning at JSC - look on.



The meals take place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and are free and open to all. Meals are served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the United Church of Johnson,

located on Rte. 15 opposite the Johnson Post Office. For more information, contact Ellen Hill at 635-1439 or ellen.hill@jsc.edu.