

From the *Philo Newsletter*, November 1, 1997:

## **Forever Food Baskets**

When long-term Philomatheons reminisce about Philo and its activities, one topic always comes up: Food Baskets!

From the very first year of the club, members have prepared and delivered baskets for needy Loveland residents.

That first year, 1918, the high school girls who were the original members pooled their allowance to fill a food basket.

By the 40's the Christmas basket tradition was firmly entrenched. According to Lucille Irwin, club president in 1945, Christmas baskets were a special part of the Philo service club tradition. Pairs of Philo members adopted needy families. Referrals came from members, churches, and schools. The Philo duos visited the families, furnished a basic food basket from club funds, and added refurbished or new toys as they saw fit.

Over the years the Christmas program grew with the addition of community involvement.

In 1948 Philo members still visited every referred family and delivered all the baskets, but "other groups and organizations gave money and figs." That year the club helped 80 families.

In 1970 the Santa Shop opened for the first time. Instead of adding toys to the food baskets, Philo members allowed parents to choose their own gifts from new and refurbished books and toys. The Santa Shop tradition continued until Philo lost its clubrooms in 1988.

In 1973 Philo started asking families from the community to help provide and deliver baskets as well. In 1975 more than 170 recipient families registered through the House of Neighborly Service, and Philomatheons visited every one and matched them to Philo or community donors.

The first canned food drive was in 1976. Junior and senior high schools collected cans, which donor families picked from the Philo clubrooms. During the 80's local banks were collection points for canned goods and the Thompson School District also continued collecting. Later the distribution center changed to the Pulliam Building and then Coy Hall.

In 1987 Philo stopped making home visits and HNS took over the screening job with Philo help.

Even though the Santa Shop is gone, the Canned Food Drive and Food Basket program continue to grow. In 1990 school children collected about 15,960 non-perishable food items and Philo matched 189 donors to 310 needy families.

Currently the collection and distribution of food is handled by four Philo committees, Food Basket Screening, Matching, Canned Food Drive, and Philo Food Baskets. Each plays an important role in providing low-income Lovelanders with holiday meals and food staples.