



## **The Upper Room States its Gratitude**

*In the spirit of Thanksgiving, The Upper Room reflects on a fundraiser held by T-BONES in June*

**Derry, NH, December 1, 2013** – Like most Americans, this past Thanksgiving, Kimberly Bavaro, Executive Director of The Upper Room, a Family Resource Center, thought of all those things for which she is thankful. As related to The Upper Room, her list was extensive: the agency's staff, numerous volunteers, board of directors, and supporters. But one item stood out – a specific fundraiser that T-BONES Great American Eatery of Derry, NH held back in June.

The Upper Room has been holding monthly donation drives in 2013. Each month, the agency advertises different items in demand - from baby products, to food for its food pantry, office supplies personal hygiene items, school supplies, cleaning items, and more. "People always ask how they can help," said Bavaro. "This made it easy for members of our community to know what they could donate."

T-BONES, a long time supporter of The Upper Room, heard of the donation drive, and wanted to help in a large way. They organized a "Prize Wheel promotion" where, for 12 days, diners paid \$5 to spin a prize wheel, for a chance of winning up to \$50 in T-BONES gift certificates. T-BONES raised nearly \$16,000 and used those funds to purchase a number of items for The Upper Room, the bulk of which were school supplies.

The school supplies were distributed to 154 families that The Upper Room serves. Recipients lived in Derry, Londonderry, Chester, Manchester, Hampstead, Salem, Danville, and Raymond. In addition to pens, pencils, binders and more "traditional" school supplies, recipients were so thankful to receive backpacks, back-to-school clothing, shoes, and even jackets.

"These items gave our families the peace of mind that they would be fully equipped to manage the upcoming back-to-school transition," stated Brenda Guggisberg, Program Coordinator for The Upper Room's GED Preparation Class. "Families called in thanking us, and telling us that without these gracious donations, they would have had no idea how they were going to get their children ready for school. By relieving families of the stress that occurs at transition times (like back to school), we reduce the risks of other significant concerns such as child abuse or neglect."

Guggisberg added, "The kids who went back to school with the supplies they needed felt relieved to not have to worry that they would be the only student without proper supplies, including clothing and shoes. This sets a tone that school is important, helps students be prepared to learn, and it reduces the stigma that many kids today feel if they aren't fully equipped. It gave them a boost to their self esteem."

Melissa Grondin, General Manager at T-BONES in Derry said, "We had a lot of fun with the Upper Room promotion. It was for a great cause and our guests were very supportive. Many even asked if we'd bring it back! We were able to provide a ton of good will for the community."

The supplies T-BONES donated not only helped The Upper Room, but also Family Promise, the Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers, School Social Workers, and The Boys and Girls Club.

“We had an excess of supplies!” Bavaro exclaimed. “So we were able to reach out to other organizations to share the items, and allow them to support the people they were serving. We are all so very appreciative of the support T-BONES offered us.”

To learn more about The Upper Room and its programs, please visit [www.urteachers.org](http://www.urteachers.org). In December, the agency is seeking donations of gift cards that could be used for participants and fundraising efforts.

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### **About The Upper Room**

Founded in 1986, The Upper Room, A Family Resource Center is a non-profit 501(C) 3 organization committed to creating educational programs and services, which strengthen individuals, families and the community. Our center is a warm, welcoming place where families receive information and support not only in times of crisis but on a day-to-day basis. There are no barriers, income guidelines or geographic limitations to participation. Our doors are open to all who come to them. For more information, call (603) 437-8477, or visit our website at [www.URteachers.org](http://www.URteachers.org)