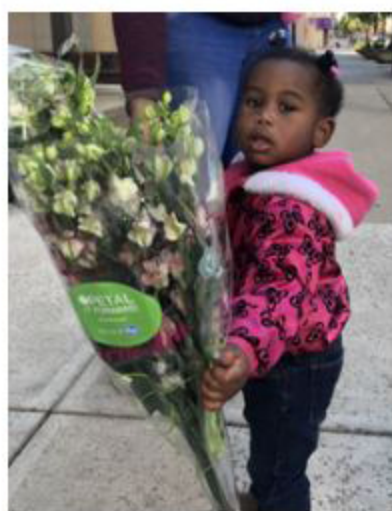




PETAL IT FORWARD

Nationwide event spreads happiness

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The initiative is part of a nationwide effort called Petal It Forward organized by the Society of American Florists (SAF). This year, over 450 Petal It Forward events took place across the country. Dümme Orange, a cut flower breeder, joined forces with The Gems Group, a marketer and distributor, and the Kroger Columbus Division, a grocery retailer, to distribute bouquets donated by The Gems Group. The other three events were in Wayne, New Jersey, where horticultural distributor McHutchison Horticulture is headquartered, Naperville, Illinois, where horticultural distributor Vaughan's Horticulture is headquartered, and Carpinteria, California, home of Dümme Orange's Cut Flower Product Manager, Christa Boerlage.

"We spread a lot of happiness," Boerlage said. "And we were able to do so because of generous flower donations from our Petal-It-Forward partners: B-Fresh Floral, Jardines de Los Andes, Farmers' West Flowers and Bouquets, Flores Prisma, Flores Silvestres, Gallup & Stribling Orchids, La Gaitana Farms, Ocean Breeze Farms, The Gems Group, and Westland Floral Company Inc." Other partners for the events include Kroger Columbus Division, Hillcrest Garden and Kennicott Brothers. All-in-all, over 15 organizations and dozens of employees made these four events possible. Boerlage added, "The events were successful due to great teamwork, and I would like to thank everyone for their donations and participation."



"I love the feeling of community this event produces," says Whitney Lenglet, Business Developer at The Gems Group. "It's wonderful to see the whole industry, from breeders to growers, suppliers, and retailers, all coming together and acting towards a common goal: to place flowers in someone's hands and spread joy throughout their community. It's truly special to witness how large of an impact a small gesture of kindness can have on someone's day."

Mike Pezzillo, Vice President of Operations at McHutchison, shared similar sentiments to Boerlage. "This was our first time participating in Petal It Forward and it definitely won't be the last. We saw the first hand effects of unexpected kindness, often emotional reactions characterized by surprise, hugs, and tears." He adds, "The power of flowers is real and people from all walks of life appreciate kindness."

