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Operation Santa targets care

 and UnitingCare are asking people to help Operation Santa, the annual Christmas appeal that helps people in the community who are struggling.

Just spot the big red Operation Santa tree at any Target store, take a gift tag from beside the tree and buy a gift for someone in need.

Alternatively, gift cards can be bought from Target

checkouts.

UnitingCare ensures the gifts are distributed to those in need in time for Christmas morning.

Recent increases in living costs and interest rate rises are placing more financial and emotional stress on many people and it is particularly hard at Christmas time.

Reverend John Dunn, chairperson of the UnitingCare WA forum, said: "There are many

people in our community who struggle through the festive season, for reasons including financial difficulties, mental illness, homelessness, family turmoil and an absence of loved ones."

Over the past 18 years, UnitingCare and Target have collected and distributed more than 1.7 million gifts.

Operation Santa will run until December 23.