

23rd Annual Peace Toys for War Toys exchange draws large crowd

BY TEVIN STINSON FOR THE CHRONICLE

When Ben Piggot started the Peace Toys for War Toys exchange program at Simms Center Recreation Center in 1992, he had one goal in mind: to let children know that there is a peaceful way to deal with any and every conflict.

"With all the violence that we see today, I felt it was important to let the children in this community know that violence is never the answer," Piggot said.

During the 23rd Annual Peace Toys for War Toys Exchange held at the Fairgrounds Annex last Saturday, well over 300 children traded toy knives, guns and other violent toys and video games for brand new, non-violent toys such as basketballs, dolls and board games.

"The event has grown tremendously over the years," said Piggot. "It has really become a holiday tradition in this area."

While every child in attendance received a new toy for the holidays, a number of lucky children took home brand new bikes as well. According to Piggot, the bikes were donated by a number of local organizations such as the Prince Hall Shriners, Carolina Cruisers Motorcycle Club, and a number of other local motorcycle clubs.

"We have had some amazing support from a number of organizations in the area," he said. "They make this event possible."

While the children bubbled over with excitement during the exchange, a number of parents said with the rise in violent toys, video games and even television shows, it is important that the children in the community learn how to communicate with their peers.

Vanessa Morgan of Winston-Salem said although she doesn't allow her son to play with guns, there are still a number of



Photo by Tevin Stinson

A member of the Carolina Cruisers motorcycle club helps a lucky young man pick out the perfect size bike during the 23rd Annual Peace Toys for War Toys Exchange

ways he is exposed to violence.

"I don't allow my son to play with guns because that's the way I was raised myself," said Morgan. "Although I don't allow him to play with those types of toys, I still feel like with television and the Internet, children have too much access to violence."

Morgan said more people should have toy exchange events because it will teach children that violence is wrong. When asked about the future of the event, Piggot seemed confident that with the help from

organizations like the fire department and police department, the event will continue to grow.

This year the Winston-Salem Police Department faced off against the Winston-Salem Fire Department in a charity game to raise toys for the exchange.

"Just like the exchange, we hope the charity game grows every year," said Piggot. "This year we had an amazing turnout, but every year I expect to be bigger than the years past. That is one way we can tell we are reaching the children."

300 children receive \$100 gift cards for holiday shopping spree at local toy store

BY TEVIN STINSON FOR THE CHRONICLE

Three hundred children from the Triad were treated to a shopping spree Wednesday, Dec. 16 thanks to the Chris Paul Family Foundation and the Josh Howard Foundation.

Since 2008 the two organizations have teamed up during Christmas to give local children \$100 Toys R Us gift cards to spend however they chose. The children who participated were handpicked by leaders at local organizations including the Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club, the city's recreation centers and area elementary schools.

Along with the gift cards, participants also received t-shirts and tickets to an upcoming Wake Forest Basketball game.

Charles and Robin Paul, the parents of professional basketball player Chris Paul, both mentioned how excited they are to see the event grow.

"The event has really grown over the years," said Charles. "We usually have around 150 kids participate and this year we were able to double that number."

According to the Paul family, Flow Chevrolet and

GMC played a major role in helping the event reach new heights. Robin Paul said the partnership allowed them to reach out to more families who may have a hard time buying Christmas gifts.

"Flow Chevrolet and GMC have been a big help this year," said Robin. "They reached out to us earlier this year and said they wanted to help. We are grateful for their help and everything they have done to make this possible."

Robin said giving back is important to her because of the way it makes her feel. She mentioned she is a firm believer that every child should have at least one present to open on Christmas morning.

"We know the importance of giving back and we try to give back to the community as much as possible," she said. "It makes you feel good to know that you are helping a young boy or girl that may not have much to open on Christmas."

While the children were excited to run free around the store, many were just as excited to take a photo with former Wake Forest All-American Josh Howard. Howard said that as a native of the city, it is

important to, return home and give back to the community as well as encourage the youth.

"I try to give back as much as possible not only during the holiday season but year 'round. That's what the foundations is all about," he said. "This community helped make me become who I am today so I try to impact the city and the kids anyway I can."

A number of volunteers who helped children browse the store for the perfect toy said seeing the look on the faces of the children when they find that toy they've been asking for all winter is what made them volunteer for the event.

Ben Esposito of Winston-Salem has been volunteering for the event since the beginning, after hearing about the event from a friend when he was in the sixth grade. Esposito said he looks forward to returning every year.

"It's nice to give to those in need because we all need a helping hand once in a while," he said. "Hanging out with Chris and Josh is pretty cool too. I look forward to seeing the event grow in the future. I think with more sponsors, it will continue to grow."



Photo by Tevin Stinson

A volunteer from Flow Chevrolet helps two local children shop for toys during the Toys R Us gift card giveaway event on Wednesday, Dec. 16.

Collection changes for Christmas and New Year's Day holidays

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

City offices will be closed today (Dec. 24) and Friday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday and on Friday, Jan. 1, for the New Year's Day holiday.

CityLink 311, the city's citizen service call center, will not be staffed on Christmas and New Year's days, but non-911 emergency calls will be forwarded to on-call staff with the appropriate department.

Requests for routine information or services may be submitted by email, the city website and the CityLink 311 mobile application for processing the next day.

Sanitation collections will be affected as follows

Week of Christmas

*Garbage: Tuesday and Wednesday as usual; Thursday collected on Monday, Dec. 28; Friday collected on Tuesday, Dec. 29.

*Recycling: Monday through Thursday as usual; Friday collected on Saturday, Dec. 26.

*Yard-waste carts: Monday and Tuesday collected on Monday, Dec 21; Wednesday on Tuesday; Thursday on Wednesday.

Week of New Year's Day

*Garbage: Tuesday and Wednesday postponed one day; Thursday collected on Monday, Jan. 4; Friday collected on Tuesday, Jan. 5. To accommodate this schedule, all garbage collections for the week after New Year's Day will be postponed a day: Tuesday on Wednesday, Wednesday on Thursday, etc. Collections for Friday, Jan. 8, will be on Monday, Jan. 11.

*Recycling: Monday through Thursday as usual; Friday collected on Saturday, Jan. 2.

Yard-waste carts: Normal schedule.

For more information call CityLink 311.

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