

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

# Christmas Cheer Toy Shop Provides Gifts, Joy, Happiness

BY JACQUES ROUSE AND AMY PHIPPS  
Staff Writers

The Christmas Cheer Toy Shop, a United Way agency which began in 1952, provides toys for needy children during the Christmas season.

Beginning in September of each year, three staff members and a core of approximately 90 volunteers package toys for children ages one to 12-years-old. The bulk of the items given away are new toys purchased with United Way funds. Additionally, numerous organizations and individuals donate "twice-loved" toys which are cleaned, repaired and distributed to children.

This year, distribution of toys will begin on December 11 and will continue until Christmas Eve, as parents come at appointed times to pick up toys for their children. Each child, most of whom are identified as needy by social services, is entitled to one bag consisting of four or five toys. According to Betty Deal, the director of the Christmas Cheer Toy Shop, "We never run out of toys!"

However, without the help of much-needed volunteers and donors, the success rate might not be so high. In fact, some of the current volunteers are parents and

children who were grateful recipients of toys in the past.

When asked how the program benefits families, Deal says in addition to helping the children get through the holiday season, the Christmas Cheer Toy Shop "helps parents' self-esteem. The idea of being an adequate provider is very important to most parents and a lot of the time these toys are the only things they'll be able to give to their children."

Another program, The Christmas Clearing House, is geared toward the needs of entire families. This is the second program operated by the staff of the shop. The clearing house matches concerned individuals or organizations with families in need of clothes and toys at Christmas time. The sponsors purchase or donate quality clothing and toys, and provide gift certificates for hard to fit items such as shoes.

Both the Christmas Cheer Toy Shop and the Christmas Clearing House are valuable programs which ease worried minds, not only during the holiday season, but also for several months after the holidays.

If you would like to help with either of these programs there are several ways

to do so. To volunteer or donate items for the Christmas Cheer Toy Shop contact Betty Deal at (910) 725-5205 or stop by the shop located at 239 S. Liberty Street. The only gifts which are restricted are toys, figures, books, etc., which depict or contain violence.

For those who are interested in becoming a Christmas Clearing House sponsor call Deal at (910) 722-0664 or stop by at the same location. For your convenience, a profile of one of the families in need of a sponsor has been included in this article. If you are interested, feel free to contact Deal.

### The Johnson Family

Douglas Johnson was initially referred to the Christmas Clearing House by social services. He is a student at The Special Children's School which educates children with physical and/or emotional difficulties. Although Doug is five-years-old, he functions in most ways like a three-year-old. Upon evaluation, social services determined that Doug's family members were also disadvantaged financially.

Doug's family consists of five

members with the following needs:

**Douglas, 5, Male** Size 10 1/2 shoes for school; socks; a hat and mittens; Sturdy plastic trucks, cars; Legos; plastic barn or gas station with animals or people.

**Tommy, 6, Male** Size 10 1/2 to 11 shoes for school; sweatshirts size 5/6; Matchbox cars, action figures, Magna Doodle.

**Amy, 1, Female** Any clothing, size 2T; Set of sturdy plastic pots with lids; toys for ages 12-24 months.

**Elizabeth, 44, Female** Women's med. size socks; any pants size small or 7/8; large sweatshirts.

**Miriam, 65, Female** Any pants size 13/14; shoes size 7 1/2

**Household** Washcloths; towels; blankets; sheets - size twin or full.

Desired date of delivery:  
December 19, 1996



## Minister

Eddie Boger, a senior political science major said, "Minister Farrakhan brought up some very interesting points. I wish everyone could have an open mind and be more receptive to his words of wisdom."

Senior Sarbeth Fleming was moved by the Minister's powerful message. "I was left with a good feeling. I hope the Minister will be able to speak at WSSU again."

"He made some good points, but you have to know what he is about," said sophomore Marcus Grant.

Junior Yolanda Linton agreed. "You have to know who you are as an individual before you hear him speak. The Minister is a motivating speaker and what he said made a lot of sense."

Business administration major, Yolanda Kelly said, "I am not a follower of Farrakhan; however, I can appreciate a lot of his beliefs and teachings."

Jhonnell Ridout, a senior mass

communications major also said she was not a follower of Farrakhan. However, she admitted that "he knocked a lot of ignorance out of me."

According to Guan Muhammad, the president of WSSU's Nation of Islam Student Association (NOISA), students have been trying to procure Farrakhan as a speaker for almost three years.

In 1994, NOISA and other student leaders submitted a proposal to then Chancellor Cleon Thompson, to invite Farrakhan to speak at WSSU, for any possible occasion. Their proposal was not approved.

Last spring, students pushed to have Farrakhan's name added to the list of desired Commencement speakers. Students even staged a demonstration to ensure that their voices were heard by the new chancellor and other administrators. His name was added, but Chancellor Alvin J. Schexnider, felt he nor the university were prepared at that time to

handle a visit from such a high-profile speaker. He promised the students that Farrakhan would be invited to speak at a later date.

The students got their wish. Farrakhan told members of the press and the students that, "The chancellor is a man of his word...I was told I would be invited this season and I was."

At the end of the program, SGA President Veronica Alexander presented Farrakhan with a WSSU jogging suit and baseball cap. Although the gift was well received by him, several students felt that the university should have done more to express their appreciation towards him. Some students feel that Minister Farrakhan should be given a honorary degree from WSSU.

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### Congratulations December Graduates!!!

Good Luck  
and  
Best Wishes  
in all  
of YOUR  
Future  
Endeavors.

