

Toy Exchange

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guns, super soakers, violent videos, violent games, etc. to exchange. In exchange for three boxes of violent toys, the kids received such rewards as bikes, scooters, basketballs, footballs and dancing Playstation games, CD players, headphones, ethnic dolls, stuffed animals, footballs, board games, computer sports games and PhatFarm attire.

This was the first year that schools, government agencies, banks, retail stores and other organizations accepted donation boxes as participants in this venture. Santa made stops at donation sites such as Paul's Schwinn Cycling and Fitness Inc., Christmas Cheer Toy Shop, Hill Traditional Academy's Junior Honor Society, Carver High School, Special Occasions Book Store, Borders at Thruway, Jeff Dooley's Best Buy, Cook's Flea Market (University Parkway), Piedmont Federal Saving and Loan (Parkway), N.C. Driver License Bureau, Segmented Marketing Services Inc. (SMSI), Weed and Seed (William Sturdivant), Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (Loretta Biggs), Winston-Salem Optimist Club and the Delta Alpha Chap-

ter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. Individuals also donated funds for toys. Forsyth County Sheriff's Department school resource officers provided crowd control, and WSMX radio station and WSNC 90.5 FM helped advertise.

Several students also won cash prizes for participating in the local North Carolinians Against Gun Violence/Millions Moms March essay contest as a demonstration against gun violence. Hayes and Gail McNeill of the Winston-Salem Chapter of North Carolinians Against Gun Violence distributed the cash awards. In the 6-8-year-old category, winners from Jefferson Davis Diggs included Bryanna McCorkle (first place), Lauran Coleman (second place) and Ebony Monroe.

In the 9-11-year-old group, Diggs students were Leah Lewis (first place), Abriana Coleman (second place) and Tamala Carter (third place). Students from Hill Middle School placed in the 12- and 13-year-old division: Samantha Beal (first place), Lola Edward (second place), Tacara Jones/Tara Keener (third place) and David Field (honorable mention).

The 14-15-year-olds from Hill Middle School were: Rita

Dennison (first place), James Gutierrez (second place). Santa congratulated Hayes and Hail McNeill for winning the 2000 NCGV Gun Violence Prevention Citizen of the Year Award.

Santa awarded Biggs, Womble, Delta Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and Hayes and Gail McNeill for their continual support of the Peace Toys for War Toys Movement at the Sims Center. Santa also congratulated Tim Grant for his years of service to the Winston-Salem Recreation Department and the job promotion in Durham as assistant recreation director.

Santa thanked Brian Manns, Belview Recreation Center supervisor; Todd Barr, Miller Park Recreation Center supervisor; Alderwoman Joycelyn Johnson; and Frank Williams for their support of the program.

Santa's next mission is to establish a peace statue to serve as a children's monument against violence. Although he stomped out the violent toys with his feet Friday night, he hopes children will eventually be able to march to a site to observe peace vigils.



A volunteer passes out toys to children at the Peace Toys for War Toys Exchange.



Photo by Kevin Walker

Claudette Henry looks at a list of her passing GED grades.

Inmates

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the numbers were small, but when the inmates saw their peers achieving, many on their said "we can do this too," Valenti said.

This week's graduation also served as a book release party for an anthology of poems and personal narratives written by the inmates. The aptly titled "Beyond These Walls" features the works of 17 inmates, including Henry's poem. Contributors got copies of the booklets before the graduation ceremony. Some read their works from a podium.

Kelley Williams read a poem titled "My Black Queen." Williams said he wrote the poem

as a tribute to strong black women like his mother and Manley, who he says has been a guiding force. The inmates dedicated the anthology to Manley. Some inmates wrote about the frustration of being locked up; others had a remorseful tone and themes of change and renewal.

Fast lives and wrong turns stood between many of the inmates and their high school education, but one of their GED teachers reminded them that it's never too late to start anew. Judy Wilkers described it as "reinvention."

"This is what you are doing today," she told the graduates. (This is) validation in some way."

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