

Grandma's Gifts

Grandma's Gifts Giving: A Review

Secret Santa 2010

You have likely witnessed the excitement when a child sees a large stack of brightly wrapped gifts Christmas morning. Now imagine the impact of those gifts when the child opening them was expecting none! What started as the first project started by Grandma's Gifts began as a direct continuation of the holiday giving Emily and her siblings, Zach and Sarah, learned by accompanying their Grandma during their early childhood. In 1993, Emily, Sarah, and Zach organized this project and raised enough funds to purchase gifts for 3 children. Over the years, the project has grown and thousands of Appalachian children referred by social service agencies have received coats, shoes, clothes, books, educational games, book bags, school supplies, and toys Christmas morning. These gifts and the funds to provide them are received by folks living



Above: Marines at Toys for Tots loading toys into the truck donated by Morningstar Mini-Storage of Lewis Center



Above: Volunteer & Kentucky Teacher, Tom Collins, helping us load truck #2 with coats and toys from American's Helping Americans

all across the United States, and throughout the world!

Last year we all helped supply gifts to over 800 children residing in the Appalachian Ohio counties of Lawrence and Adams as well as assisted an organization in War, West Virginia providing Christmas gifts to retired war veterans and the elderly. Our donations to verified gift recipients totaled over \$33,000 for Christmas and expenses for gift delivery (gas) and printing were less than \$950. Record support came from our private donors as well as from the staff at Battelle for Kids (a nonprofit that works with districts on educational reform initiatives), Old Navy, American's Helping Americans, Toys for Tots, and Morningstar Mini-Storage who continues to donate Grandma's Gifts the use of their truck and a storage facility. While delivering gifts on a slippery, snowy, and quite frankly, dangerous night with Grandma's Gifts volunteers Andrew Flannery and Tom Collins, I was asked by a little boy in need, "how exactly I got to know Santa so well." I laughed and said, "I have always been on the Nice List, so he asked me to help." While Santa Claus and my parents may report something different, it was great to know that the holiday spirit is alive and well, even for children in need!

Educational Experiences 2010 – 2011

This year, through a generous donation from Emerson Network Power and many individuals, we were able to provide 40 talented and gifted children the opportunity to attend a two-week-long summer camp called the Ohio University Academy of Excellence in Ironton, Ohio. At the Academy, children can take "Curtain Rising," where they get the opportunity to learn about theater and present a play; "Project Runway," where they learn how to design clothing and jewelry and run their own design company; "CSI," a seriously goeey and gross hands-on science class that worked with the local sheriff to solve a (fake) mysterious crime; or classes on math, sports, Spanish, computers, and more! This camp is absolutely fantastic and continues to be one of the projects Grandma's Gifts looks forward to every year.

For the 2010-2011 school year, Symmes Valley Elementary School from Willow Wood, Ohio was provided the supplies to take the entire second grade to the Newport Aquarium for the day. Rather than continue to make the trip in the spring, we decided to make it in the fall, so on November 4th, the 2011-2012 second grade class attended the Newport Aquarium. Grandma's Gifts paid for aquarium admissions, healthy snacks, as well as the money for the children to go out to eat. Many of these children have never been out of Lawrence County or been to a sit down restaurant. The total cost for these 65 children to have an education and fun adventure three hours away from home was less than \$950. Just a week ago, the teacher shared with me that the children cheered when the package containing the aquarium admission arrived at the school... she ended her email explaining that many of the children were overly excited to go out to eat, a trip most of us never see as a true treat.

Grandma's Gifts 444 Green Meadows Drive West, Powell, OH 43065 P: 614.388.9007

www.GrandmasGifts.org

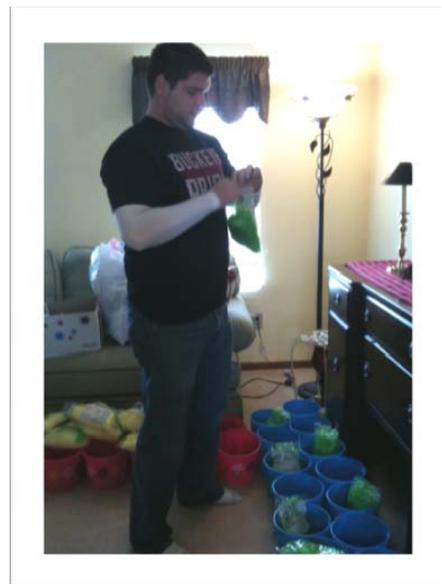


Above: Volunteer Andrew Flannery, delivering Easter baskets & food

Easter Food & Gift Baskets of Hope!

Long time volunteer, Andrew Flannery, approached me and asked if he could take on a project of his own. After much thought and personal reflection, Andrew decided that he wanted to provide Easter dinner and goodies to kids who lived where his family was originally from, a town outside of Morehead, Kentucky. Grandma's Gifts had done a similar project in the past, working with churches in Upper Arlington and Dublin, Ohio, but had not had the request for Easter assistance in some time. So, Andrew got to work reviving the project! He planned the

event and travel, asked for donations, and worked with a church to locate families in need. Columbus volunteers purchased food, bubbles, and Easter baskets. Then Andrew and his family drove to Morehead and delivered the baskets. Andrew said that while physically difficult, he will always remember the great rewards of the project. More than 40 families and 125 children were provided with food and Easter baskets this past April!



Above: Volunteer George McNab, making Easter baskets

Thanksgiving 2010 & 2011

While we handed out Thanksgiving turkeys in 2008 and 2009 in 30 degree weather, but ended up with a beautiful day for 2010. With approximately 20 volunteers from Grandma's Gifts, Emerson Network Power family, Ironton residents, as well as volunteers from the Ironton City and Lawrence County Health Departments. Grandma's Gifts volunteers handed out 1520 turkeys from American's Helping American's in the Emerson Network Power parking lot in Ironton, Ohio to school children, churches, battered women's shelters, and food pantries from Huntington, West Virginia, Ashland and Raceland Kentucky, as well as Ironton, Coal Grove, Symmes Valley, and Rock Hill, Ohio. While handing out turkeys in the parking lot we filled everyone's hands and pockets with toothbrushes, toothpaste, and dental floss. The responses to the turkeys and dental supplies brought tears to our volunteer's eyes. We received many hugs and witnessed tears of gratitude from those who work but are just unable to make ends meet. Those responses are why we all —volunteers, donors, and supporters alike— do what we do to help. As many organizations are struggling, we were unable to secure the donation of turkeys for 2011. While we do not have the funds to purchase 1500 turkeys ourselves, we love helping families for Thanksgiving so we donated \$400 in canned foods to a food pantry in Lawrence County.

Below: Volunteer Tina Behrans, sorting hygiene products

Trick-or-Teeth! & Bubbles Breaking Barriers 2010 & 2011

Since 2010, over \$95,000 in dental hygiene products and person hygiene products were collected and sent to health departments, schools, food pantries, and shelters in Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia. One of the participants from 2007, 2008, 2009, and this year is a Columbus Public School where many of the children themselves come from families in need. While loading their donations a zip lock baggie fell out of the box. Within the bag was a half-tube of toothpaste and a used toothbrush. The teacher helping Emily apologized profusely, to which Emily responded, "There's no need to apologize. Maybe this is all they had to give." It just so happened that this child's family couldn't afford to buy new goods to donate so this second grader had secretly and most delicately packed and donated his own things because he wanted to help so badly. *This is the true spirit of giving...*

