



HELPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Anna Grace/Index

Kirkville residents browse through items available for auction Saturday at the Kirkville Moose Lodge. The auction featured a variety of items from different groups and proceeds benefited the Adopt-A-Child program.

Kiwanis parade collects clothing

The Kiwanis Christmas Parade gathers clothing for children

BY SARAH MUIR
Staff Reporter

The Kirkville community is gearing up for the holiday season by reaching out to children in need.

The Kirkville Kiwanis Club is sponsoring the inaugural Kirkville Kiwanis Christmas Parade, which will occur at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 22. Floats decorated with Christmas lights will travel along Franklin Street, said Ashley Young, Kirkville Kiwanis Club President. He said the parade's goal is to gather donations of winter items for children.

Young said he is concerned about Kirkville's harsh winters and children throughout the community who go without warm clothes to wear. Fifty percent of the children in the Kirkville school district have free or reduced lunch, he said.

Young had the idea of hosting a parade after watching "A Christmas Story," and said he wondered why Kirkville did not have a Christmas parade.

"We're always looking for new ways to serve the children of Kirkville, and it can be difficult to get people involved," Young said.

A Christmas parade sponsored by the Kiwanis Club is a great way to raise interest in the community, he said.

The Kirkville Kiwanis Club has decided the theme for the parade will be "Warm and Fuzzy," Young said. Instead of an entry fee to see the parade, people are asked to donate children's clothes — ideally winter specific items like mittens, coats and scarves, he said. Young said the Kiwanis Club is inviting local organizations to participate in the parade, and they already have seen interest.

The club's overall goal always is to fulfill its mission of helping community children, but its goal for this parade is to collect plenty of clothing items, Young said. In addition, they want the Kirkville Kiwanis Christmas Parade to become an annual event, he said.

The Kirkville Fire Depart-

ment, KTUF radio and the Adair County Family Services are coming together to serve the children in a different way by sponsoring Adopt-A-Child for the holiday season, program coordinator Teresa Attebery said. The two different charity events work toward the same goal of helping the children of Kirkville during the season of giving, she said. She said the Adopt-A-Child program has been a part of Adair County since 1985.

The program lets people "adopt" children for the holiday season by giving them a gift, she said. People can listen to KTUF radio for an advertisement about a child in the program and what they want, then call in and say they would like to adopt that child, she said. The program is an important part of the community because there are some children who might not get gifts without it, Attebery said.

The program is supported by three different organizations: Family Services, which sets the guidelines for eligibility and gathers what each child wants, KTUF, which advertises different children people can adopt and the Fire Department, where the gifts are sent and wrapped, she said.

"When everyone does their part it really comes together," Attebery said.

The program is for newborns to 16-year-olds, she said, and children ages 12 to 16 have a separate party. They are given \$25 dollar gift cards and are then taken shopping instead of being given a more traditional gift, Attebery said. The Alpha Phi Omega fraternity from the A.T. Still University College of Osteopathy Medicine hosts this party and takes them shopping, she said.

To fund the gift cards for the 12 to 16-year-olds and other expenses, like the wrapping material and holiday parties for the children of both age groups, the Kirkville Moose Lodge and Women of the Moose have an auction to help raise money needed to fill in the gaps, said Melanee Crist, a Women of the Moose member. Crist said the program helps about 400 kids in the Kirkville area every year, which shows just how much of a difference it makes.

Students provide company for the elderly

Individual students choose to volunteer their time at Twin Pines' Nursing Home

BY DANIELLE BRESHEARS
Staff Reporter

At Truman State, winter break offers students a break from classes and a chance to go home for the holidays, but junior Valinda Bartow has chosen to give back to others during break instead of spending time at home. Bartow said she is making a point to remember the reason for the season.

Bartow is planning to spend Christmas Day at Twin Pines Nursing Home. She said having her mother work at a nursing home made her realize the importance of volunteering time to those who might not have family during the holidays. Working with Twin Pines' activities

director, Ruth Anne Picker, Bartow and other students are able to volunteer their time this holiday season.

Being a member of Alpha Phi Omega is what got Bartow involved with volunteering at Twin Pines. Bartow enjoyed it so much, she decided to go more often and even volunteer for Christmas, she said.

"You hear some of the stories of how some residents don't have families to come visit them, and that really kind of inspired me to do this," Bartow said.

Bartow is going to go home to spend time with her family on Christmas Eve and is planning to drive back to Kirkville early Christmas morning with her father to get to Twin Pines in time to celebrate, she said.

Bartow said she enjoys visiting Twin Pines when she can. Between the fun 'back in the good ol' days' stories and getting beat in rummy, the experience can be rewarding, she said.

"It's just so heartwarming," Bartow said. "It makes me feel good to know that I made somebody's day just by going in and listening to their stories and playing cards with them."

Picker explained how much she appreciates student volunteers, especially during the holidays. Many volunteers are needed to help wrap presents for the residents, she said. Picker said she gets a lot of help from service organizations such as APO, and enjoys when individual volunteers come to help as well.

The activities coordinators at Twin Pines organize various activities, games and parties for the residents on a regular basis, Picker said. She said they even have local musical performers and hair stylists come for the residents.


Junior Rachel Morgan has been involved with Twin Pines through the Adopt a Grandparent program and said she enjoys spending time with her 'grandparent' whenever she has time.

"[Being there] for somebody who doesn't have any family to visit them is beyond rewarding," Morgan said. "The holiday season is an especially important time to remember those who may not have a family to celebrate with."

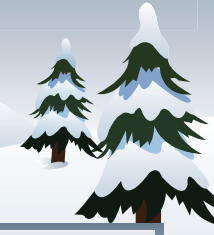
Making somebody feel remembered is what it's all about, she said. Morgan said she also enjoys listening to the stories the residents have to tell her when she visits, as well as learning to play card games she never even knew existed.

"Many people tend to forget that Christmas time is a season of joy and giving, and I think anything you can do to give back is great," Morgan said.

Volunteers at Twin Pines always are welcome, and Picker said she loves when a college student will come to visit a particular resident once a week, or even just send a card their way every now and then.




HOLIDAY GIVING THROUGHOUT KIRKSVILLE




December 13

Kirkville Kiwanis Club's annual Western's Meat Sales Fundraiser to benefit children throughout the community. Orders must be completed by Dec. 13.



December 22

Kirkville Kiwanis Christmas Parade at 4:30 p.m.



December 25

First United Methodist Church is having its 17th annual Community Christmas Dinner at 1 p.m.



All Season

Give to the United Way of Northeast Missouri at www.liveunitednemo.org to help 13 local partner agencies during the holiday season.