

Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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News & Media

Making Christmas Bright lives up to name

Port St. Lucie – More than 50 local businesses and community groups joined Devereux Community Based Care's Making Christmas Bright gift collection this month, bringing in more than 3,000 gifts for children in foster care and continuing an upward trend in giving that began last year.

Gifts have been on the uptick since Guardians for New Futures joined the Making Christmas Bright project last year to coordinate drives in Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee counties.

Minton Law PA, which fulfills the gift wishes of all teenagers in St. Lucie County - about 120 of them - also deserves credit for the increase.



Happy case managers prepare to load gifts to distribute to the children and families in their care. These gifts came from community sponsors who collected enough gifts to give every child in the Circuit 19 Dependency System at least three gifts.

"We have a few key sponsors who take on broad swaths of our population, and that has really made a difference," said Christina Kaiser, Devereux CBC Community Relations Director and Making Christmas Bright project coordinator.

Ms. Kaiser also credits the loyalty of long-time sponsors, like St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, which has participated in the project since its inception, and a constant stream of new partners drawn in by the media sponsorship of The Hometown News.

Donations also come in through holiday parties hosted for local foster families. For example, the Junior League of Indian River County has been sponsoring a Christmas party for local foster families since 2001. This year, the League got some help from the law firm of Rossway, Swan, Tierney & Barry, which chooses an agency each year to assist with holiday gifts. Thanks to the partnership, all 43 children attending the December 13 party received several gifts from a visiting Santa.

Sponsors this year included: Lakes of Tradition, Martin Health System, Port St. Lucie Presbyterian Church, Harbor Insurance Agency, Centennial High School HOSA, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, St. Andrew's Academy, La Buona Vita, Tropicana, the staff of Devereux CBC, Treasure Coast Builders Association, Berry Fresh Cafe, Sparemakers Bowling League, Sungrove Montessori, Port St. Lucie High School JROTC, Pursuit Boats, Solei Salon, Olive Garden Tradition, Old Navy Tradition, Clark Advanced Learning Center NHS, the Amy Collins Family, 7th Day Adventist Church, First United Methodist Church of Fort Pierce, Kappa Kappa Iota, The Grove Church, Translations USA, St. Lucie Gardens and the St. Lucie County School District Transportation Department.



Santa visits with children attending this year's Junior League of Indian River County Christmas party.



Tom Butler, a volunteer with Guardians for New Futures, unloads gifts at the DCBC Martin County Service Center.

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