



# **The 5th Annual Cookies & Cocoa for Community Christmas held at Freer Auto Body was a Resounding Success!**

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Godfrey, IL –The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Cookies & Cocoa for Community Christmas event held on Thursday December 6 at Freer Auto Body “Was a resounding success!” according to Mary Jo Kratschmer, Chair of the Community Christmas committee. Community Christmas is a combined effort of the Tri-cities United Way and The Telegraph; throughout the community, individuals and businesses contact either The Telegraph or the United Way and ask for large decorated boxes that will then be filled with new bikes, toys, coats and baby supplies. Once an event is held, everything is taken to a United Way facility for sorting and distribution to families needing assistance.

Mary Jo has been working with the United Way as a volunteer for many years and missed the event at Freer’s because she was being awarded Volunteer of the Year by the United Way of Tri-cities at Hathaway Hall. Her first thought the morning after the event was “We’re going to need a bigger truck!” the boxes overflowed their capacity! Margaret Freer, coordinator of the yearly event, said that “We had about 175 attendees and collected literally tons of new bikes, toys and coats”; “To top it off”, she said, “Over \$5000 was collected.”

As a way of both enticing attendees to participate and to thank all those taking the time to stop in for Christmas cheer, the Freer’s donated a battery powered truck for kids, an Xbox and \$500 to be used as door-prizes. The winners were: Margo Huber – battery powered truck; Dale Neudecker – Xbox; Hazel Morgan - \$500.

Kratschmer ended up calling in back-up in the form of her husband Mark who, with the help of Wegman Electric, was able to get another truck and Ron Winkler, who with his grandson Kevin, pitched in to get the generous gifts moved.

David's mother Margaret said "David loved Community Christmas and he had such a giving heart; we do this as a tribute to him and his life." And to all who work each year to make the event happen – it's a labor of love.