

A Happy Thanksgiving: Got Faith Ministries, Santa, reach out to needy family with turkey, trimmings

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EAST ALTON - East Alton's Cyndy Roper and her family had a surprise Wednesday morning when Santa arrived in his red suit with a handful of turkey and all the trimmings to ensure the family had a special Thanksgiving.

Cyndy's neighborhood was mesmerized with Santa's arrival and kids and families flocked to him before and after he visited the Roper family. The Roper family had contacted Riverbender.com about a week ago and said in the phone call it was going to be a difficult Thanksgiving and they didn't see any way there would be turkey and the items associated with it on the table this year. Riverbender.com contacted Got Faith Ministries in Jersey County and in turn the agency used a special donation and their tight relationship with Santa to make the dinner happen.

Got Faith Ministries is involved in countless events through the year in Jersey and beyond.

Santa Claus doesn't normally make appearances on Thanksgiving, but he broke tradition when he learned of this family's plight. "We have to take care of the people who are struggling," he said. "I heard about it, thought about and decided I had to do it. It was a very special day with the family."

The Roper family was overwhelmed upon Santa's arrival and today is sitting down for their very own family feast. When Santa entered the house, the Roper family both had tears of joy in her eyes. She thanked Santa and the special people with Got Faith Ministries and Riverbender.com for the donation.

"This is one of the nicest things anyone has ever done for me," she said, holding back tears.

Cyndy is on disability and has several approaching surgeries and both of her two children have disabilities.

She said it is important to help people when they are struggling. She said she admired the attorney who gave out turkeys at Thanksgiving and people like Ryan Hansen of Hansen's Meat Market, who also distributed more than 500 free turkeys this year.

Cyndy's family trailer in East Alton is in need of repairs. The roof is in bad shape and the trailer does not have central heat anymore, she uses space heaters for the winter, so it is difficult when it gets cold outside. During the summer she uses window unit air conditions to keep the place livable. The floors in her trailer also need to be replaced, she said.

Christmas will be tough for the Roper family and she said there aren't many presents able to be exchanged, they just try to remember the purpose of the day - to worship and give thanks to Jesus.

Any individual, church, business or organization who wishes to provide help to the Roper family with their trailer or Christmas assistance can contact Cyndy at (618) 832-2586.

Santa had some solid advice for everyone: "You don't have to be in a red Santa suit to make a difference. Everyone can make a difference even if we do it one person at a time."