

# Alton NAACP again helps children with shoe giveaway

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
December 17 2014 6:41 PM



Alton branch of NAACP President James Gray visits with some youngsters who received new shoes at Payless from the annual giveaway on Saturday. The giveaway concluded Tuesday.

Every year, the Alton branch of the NAACP puts area youth at the forefront at Christmas time, delivering shoes and toys.

Alton NAACP President James Gray and volunteers completed the shoe giveaway on Tuesday and the said the group provided new shoes for 45 area children at Payless in Alton on Saturday and early this week.

Gray started the shoe giveaway several years ago because of growing up often without having proper shoes himself.

“I just feel so delighted we are able to get donations from people in the community to help us with what we are trying to do,” he said of the Christmas shoe and toy program. “I am happy the people in the Alton community support what I am trying to do. Each pair of shoes has deep meaning. The children look down at their shoes and it makes me feel so good about it when they can look down and see they are equal to the other kids.”

Payless has worked with the NAACP for several years in this program.

Gray said he is in some ways thankful for his upbringing that didn’t always provide him the most at Christmas time.

“I think it made me realize that when you help others it is always a blessing for them and you,” he said.

On Christmas Day, Gray said he always wakes up thinking about the NAACP’s Christmas shopping spree and shoe giveaway.

“I always wake up with a happy smile on my face that the families that needed it wake up with some toys, shoes and food,” he said. “I also think that we were able to make it possible because the community donated.”