



Christmas Joy For Children: Marine Corps Toys For Tots Distribution One Of Best Ever

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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WOOD RIVER - Once again the area Marine Corps Toys For Tots Distribution Day at the Wood River VFW brought more smiles and thankful parents than could be counted.

Because of Marine volunteers, along with extraordinary efforts by others who donated their time, with host Wood River VFW and contributors, there will be a lot of joy spread on Christmas Day.

When Marines take their oath prior to boot camp, it is one for them that lasts a lifetime. The saying "Once A Marine, Always A Marine" holds so true and was very evident last weekend. Marine Toys For Tots coordinator for this region, Glenn Heimer, and his fellow Marines live by the words of the oath they took years before - one to serve their country and people who need them, long after they leave active service.

The Marines Corps Toys For Tots annual distribution nationwide has been something families and children throughout the region look forward to each year. Many who are

financially challenged, would not receive toys at Christmas time without this group effort. The recent Toys and Tots event was one of the best ever locally and close to 11,000 toys, bikes, other Christmas items, were given out.

Glenn Heimer said this distribution was definitely one of the best in his 15-year span with the program. He first thanked his wife for her endless support of the toy distribution.

"We probably distributed close to 11,000 items," Heimer, a Marine, said. "This is the 15th year I have been involved."

Heimer was an active Marine from 1986 to 1990.





Heimer said he couldn't say enough about the collection of volunteers and the community for their time and significant donations. He also thanked the Wood River VFW for their partnership in the distribution. Santa Claus also made an appearance at the Toys and Tots event. Louie, the Blues mascot, was beyond extraordinary, Heimer said, and spent several hours at the toy giveaway, Heimer added.

Debbie Frakes, a spokesperson for the Little Black Book Club, a large contributor to the success, said she was extremely proud of the Marine Reserves event. Debbie and other Little Black Book Club members volunteered at the toy giveaway. She added that she had not seen anything quite like what happened this past weekend with the vast amount of toys, bikes, etc., given away.

The LBB Madison County Chapter collected hundreds of toys and also was able to supply generous monetary donations for the Toys For Tots program. The group had a collection event at Old Bakery Beer recently. Lisa Webb, the president of the LBB Madison County Chapter, said she was "blown away by the number of toys they received" at their Old Bakery event.

"Words can't describe how grateful I am for all the people that have come together to make this happen," she said.















