

Community Hope Center Toy Giveaway A Success Yet Again

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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COTTAGE HILLS – The Community Hope Center opened its doors again this holiday season with its annual toy/clothing giveaway.

Friday and Saturday over 160 families came through to pick out their own toys for the 411 children registered.

The center had a wide variety of items and was organized based on age and gender.

All of the toys were donations from the community. The center sends out barrels around September to many businesses and churches and then those are filled up and brought back to the center to be sorted.

According to Hope Center Operations Manager Ann Crane, they sent out 70 barrels all over the Riverbend area. She was thrilled with the communities response and said it's been another big success.

“Absolutely. We were a little concerned. We didn't know with the economy the way it was, what it might look like. But honestly, the public came through with flying colors. Our community is very supportive of this, and this year is no different. We were really surprised and excited with the way everyone responded,” Crane said.

According to her, the work for this event really started back in August and ramps up in November. That's when the barrels are returned and the toys are sorted based on age and gender. She said that there are people working five days a week 8-10 hour days to make sure everything is set and proper.

The Hope Center has been doing these toy giveaways for over 30 years Crane said. The Hope Center turns 35 next year.

The two-day event started yesterday and finished on Saturday. Parents and grandparents went through and picked out exactly what they wanted.

“What we like about the way we do our system is we allow the parents to come in and pick for themselves. In some places, you just get a bag of toys and they have no choice. We just want to make sure it's personal,” Crane said.

She said that if toys are left over that they will keep some back for next year, but also help out other agencies in need.

Crane couldn't help but thank the people that made this possible.

“We have a great community. It was a great response. We're very fortunate.”