



RECORD \$24,000 RAISED: Community pours out hearts for Christmas In July day

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 1 2015 6:35 AM





GODFREY - It was beginning to look a lot like Christmas on Friday at **Freer Auto Body**.

Taylor and Lily Freer and the rest of the Freer family hosted its annual **Christmas In July** event, which raised a phenomenal \$24,000 for Community Christmas.

Community Christmas is an annual **United Way** toy and clothing collection for the impoverished. The meal at **Freer Auto body in Godfrey** consisted of Sloppy Joes, chips and Margaret Freer's well-known cheesecake. The large group in attendance all had smiles on their faces, enjoying the meal with the joy of helping a good cause.

Margaret Freer said the family's goal was to top the \$20,000 mark in fund-raising and they did that by \$4,000, getting to \$24,000 total.

"The customers and sponsors make this event happen; we just put the event on," Margaret Freer said. "It means a lot to the community. We are very blessed and thankful we have the ability to help others."

There were several event sponsors and a first-class raffle for \$10 a ticket. A main raffle item included a seven-night condo stay at Orange Park in Kissimmee, Fla., three miles from Disney, plus \$1,000 cash.

Other raffle prizes were four tickets to NASCAR Kansas Speedway on Oct. 18, plus one night lodging, also donated by Axalta Coatings.

Four Cardinal Green Seats were donated by John and Amy Barnerd Also donated was two nights lodging and four tickets to Holiday World in Santa Claus, Ind.

Lily Freer was going to donate money to Community Christmas from her piggy bank and she and Taylor decided with their grandmother they would raise more through selling Sloppy Joe's and Kool-Aid and it has grown from there.

Taylor Freer, 11, said she felt grateful they can devote their time to helping other children have a better Christmas.

Lily Freer, 8, said she has participated in the event since she was only 2 years old.

"It means a lot to me because we get to give people things they don't have," she said.

Margaret Freer is always the proud grandmother devoted to both Taylor and Lily. The two grandchildren are the light of Margaret's life. She beamed with pride when the two girls answered their questions.

She said both were good girls and had been taught such important lessons at a very young age.

Margaret said Lily and her friend Maria Stanton even delivered flyers over the last week taking a wagon around the neighborhood to drum up business for the Christmas In July event.



Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton, was in attendance and he said this event fits right in with his love of Christmas, his favorite holiday.

“Christmas is my favorite time of the year,” he said. “Anything that focuses on Christmas and serves a good cause is something I want to support. It is refreshing to see young people, Taylor, Lily and the others, so involved.”

Tim Freer, one of the co-owners of the auto body business, said it is “very heartwarming” to know how much the region supports this good cause.

“It shows how great our community is,” he said. “I also think of my late brother, David, every year when we do this event. David was my best friend and I admired him so much as my older brother.

“I think of David every single day. The Christmas In July just keeps growing every year. We have kept the tradition going in memory of my brother.”

Video of the Christmast in July event -

Photos from the Christmast in July event -

