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## Call in the Marines

*Toys For Tots distribution succeeds; Second give-away set for today (Saturday)*



The first set of the 600-plus people receiving gifts are seen on Friday.

Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 9, 2015 at 7:07 p.m.

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**CHIEFLAND** -- The first distribution of toys to families involved with the Toys For Tots program went successfully Friday (Dec. 9) in the parking lot of the Walmart in Chiefland.

Another one is scheduled for tomorrow. All of the families scheduled to receive toys know about this.



Here are some of the toy furniture pieces created by Florida state prison inmates. And so the Florida Department of Corrections helps bring happiness to the less fortunate families in the area.

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Tri-County Toys For Tots Coordinator Bryan Chrisp was upbeat late Friday when he was interviewed while in the midst of the distribution that happened from 2 to 6 p.m. on Friday.

"Once a Marine, always a Marine," said the former United States Marine Corps corporal. While he is not enlisted anymore, Chrisp is like many Marines – a Marine.

The Toys For Tots program is a Marine Corps Reserve program.



**Tri-County Community Resource Center Administrator Beverly Goodman stands with USMC Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harvie Hampton, the Judge Advocate for the Tri-County Marine Corps League Detachment 1018.**

Among the top set of helpers for Chrisp's activities this season is Tri-County Community Resource Center Administrator Beverly Goodman.

This was a banner year for the families in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties who benefitted from the distribution. Goodman said there are more than 600 children getting gifts that would not have seen much in the way of that Christmas joy without the Marines and the multitude of civilian volunteers.

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**Tri-County Community Resource Center Administrator Beverly Goodman stands with Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum (left) and Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz. The Tri-County Community Resource Center served as one of the focal points to bring the whole event together.**

Also stepping up to the plate as volunteers early-on in the Friday distribution process were Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum and Gilchrist County Sheriff Bobby Schultz.

Joining Sheriff McCallum from the LCSO were Sgt. Max Long, and deputies Chase Gregory, Bubba Wells and John Gulledge. Sgt. Long mentioned that LCSO victim advocates Amanda Sauder and Raquel Alfonso were among the people who helped from the LCSO on Friday.

Assisting Sheriff Schultz from the GCSO on Friday were Sgt. Clint Anderson, Sgt. Keagon Weatherford, and deputies Chris Hale and Michael Rome.

Sheriff Schultz said one member of his team who has been instrumental in the logistics required to make this a success is GCSO Capt. Sheryl Brown.

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**Ted Henley (left), who is the chaplain for the Tri-County Marine Corps League Detachment 1018, works in the back of one of the semi-trailers with Kyle Roberts (center) and Wesley Asbell on Friday.**

The people working in the back of the trailers have the responsibility of locating the correct bag of toys for each family.

USMC Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harvie Hampton, the Judge Advocate for the Tri-County Marine Corps League Detachment 1018, was present as a Marine – helping as has for several years now.

Many, many other volunteers helped people check in and accept their gifts for the children. Pat Arcadi, who with her husband Vince has been extremely involved in the program, was out again Friday helping people collect their gifts.

Late Friday afternoon, being interviewed while in the process of the distribution, Chrisp mentioned he is extremely thankful for all of the donations of time, strength and every other resource for another successful yearly event to help children have a better Christmas than they would have experienced without the Toys For Tots program.

People who are giving toys, time and other assets are thankful as well to the families who are accepting them, because this lets the givers enjoy the feeling that comes from those actions. The program ran smoothly again, thanks to the coordinated efforts of people cooperating for one cause.

The Toys For Tots program is completed by a 100 percent volunteer organization that is sponsored by the United States Marine Corps Reserve. The Marines that coordinate and assist with the campaign are all former active duty Marines who have honorably served the United States of America and they live in the community.

These Marines and other volunteers, some veterans of other branches, and many non-veterans, donate their time and resources to promote and support this local campaign.

All donations are used in the community to reach as many children as possible. These

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volunteers note that they are grateful for the support they have received from local businesses, organizations and individuals.

The mission, goal, objectives and activities of the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program is noted below, verbatim from the group's official website.

**MISSION:**

The mission of the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

**GOAL:**

The primary goal of Toys for Tots is to deliver, through a new toy at Christmas, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of Toys for Tots are to help less fortunate children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas; to play an active role in the development of one of our nation's most valuable resources – our children; to unite all members of local communities in a common cause for three months each year during the annual toy collection and distribution campaign; and to contribute to better communities in the future.

**ACTIVITIES:**

The principal Toys for Tots activity which takes place each year is the collection and distribution of toys in the communities in which a Marine Corps Reserve Unit is located. In communities without a Reserve Unit, the campaign can be conducted by a Marine Corps League Detachment or group of men and women, generally veteran Marines, authorized by Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to conduct a local Toys for Tots campaign.

Local Toys for Tots Campaign Coordinators conduct an array of activities throughout the year, which include golf tournaments, foot races, bicycle races and other voluntary events designed to increase interest in Toys for Tots, and concurrently generate toys and monetary donations.