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## Distribution of toys mission succeeds; *837 children served*



**Shawn Royce (left) and Gigi Daube are volunteers who prepare to check in another recipient of toys on Friday (Dec. 15).**

### Story and Photos

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Dec. 17, 2017 at 1:37 p.m.**

**CHIEFLAND** -- Call in the Marines.

Members of the United States Marine Corps know their standing among the world's various sets of soldiers. They are Marines, and they are called upon for missions.

As for the Tri-County Toys for Tots Program, the USMC Reserve is the key organization, and for the past five years or so Bryan Chrisp has led the charge, seeing success each year with some alterations from year-to-year in regard to responses from the communities in Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

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**Star Pope, who works in the Florida Department of Health's Levy County Unit, is among the volunteers seen Friday assisting in the program to distribute toys.**



**Bryan Chrisp, Tri-County Toys For Tots coordinator, points from the back of a semi-trailer loaded with bags of toys. His daughter Madison Chrisp is seen behind him. Another of the many helpers is Sgt. Max Long of the Levy County Sheriff's Office. He is seen in the distance on the ground.**

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Some of the many people on Friday are seen waiting in lines. There were people in lines an hour before the start of the toy distribution. One advantage of arriving early last year was the chance to accept a handmade large wooden toy or children's picnic table. That option did not exist this year because the Dixie County Little League organization had first dibs on those large wooden furniture and toys.



Volunteers, including members of Chiefland Fire Rescue, are seen here helping to distribute toys. Two firefighters had to leave their volunteer duties with Toys For Tots on Friday to be the first responders to a medical call at a nearby retail outlet, where a woman had fallen. They were at that scene within three minutes of being dispatched, taking Squad-1 from Walmart to the other place's parking lot.

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**Johnathan Crisp, the son of Bryan Crisp, is among the workers who volunteered to help his Dad. He is seen here with a bag of toys for other children.**

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**Chiefland Assistant Fire Chief A.D. Goodman is seen checking the name on an identification card so that he can walk back into the semi-trailer and find the gifts. The woman in this photo is Diana Child, a volunteer who works at First United Methodist Church of Chiefland, as well as volunteering at Tri-County Community Resource Center and is among the strong volunteers at Suwannee Valley Players as well. Jerry Crawford (not pictured) is a volunteer for Toys For Tots, First United Methodist Church of Chiefland and the Tri-County Community Resource Center. Among the volunteers from Gilchrist County on Friday were Norman and Melissa Waterston of the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office Volunteers.**

On Friday and Saturday (Dec. 15 and 16), Chrisp led another set of people, organizations, business interests, government entities and other volunteers to deliver a more joyful Christmas to 837 children than those hundreds of children would have experienced if not for the combined efforts of people in Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist and Alachua counties.

The Friday afternoon process kicked off the two-day distribution event.

Chrisp said some volunteers called him at the last minute because they faced unanticipated issues and were unable to help. Who do the Marines call when they need help in a civilian matter? Chiefland Fire Rescue was one set of volunteers who ramped up their efforts on Friday.

Fire Chief James Harris, CFR Capt. Dwayne King and Firefighter David Hallman helped. Assistant Fire Chief A.D. Goodman was very committed to the mission already, though, because his wife Beverly Goodman is the manager of the Tri-County Community Resource Center, one of the most significant parties in the Toys For Tots program again for Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties.

Bass Pro Shops of Gainesville Manager Mike O'Brien and Assistant Manager Amanda Bryant, Chrisp said, helped the Tri-County Toys For Tots program to a very significant degree this year.

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And once again, there were two fraternities and one sorority at the University of Florida who had volunteers giving hours of service to assure the mission's success this year, Chrisp said.

The gentlemen at Alpha Gamma Rho, one other fraternity and the ladies at Chi Omega sorority are among the champions helping the cause for children in the Tri-County Area this year.

Another set of helpers from the area east of the Tri-County area is the UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Department. North Florida Regional Medical Center kicked in a significant donation of boxes, and boxes of new unwrapped toys as well

The list of helpful people is too long for Chrisp to name them all. Walmart in Chiefland and the Levy County Sheriff's Office are a couple of other significant providers of assistance.

One company literally came to the rescue with semi-tractors and trailers for transport, but the owner asked to remain anonymous.

One of the people helping distribute Friday was Sylvester Davis of Tarpon Springs. For 30 years, from 1958 to 1988, he was a recruiter for the USMC. He comes up from Tarpon Springs to help in the Toys For Tots program.

Chrisp's predecessor has gone to Heaven for about a year now.

Vincent "Vince" James Arcadi (Dec 4, 1949 - Dec 30, 2016) was 67 when he passed away.

The former Old Town resident was honored at a memorial service Jan. 7, 2017 at the First United Methodist Church of Cross City.

He joined the USMC in 1970. He was assigned to 2nd Marine Division in Camp Lejeune, N.C., and deployed to Vietnam as a corporal. Vince served honorably until 1972 when he was discharged.

His passion for the community was reflected in the many organizations he was a member of, but most notably the Tri-County Marine Corps League as the Coordinator for Toys for Tots where he served for more than 10 years.

Vince met his wife Patricia "Pat" in 1985 and were married soon thereafter. Pat was always active in the Toys For Tots program as well.

In 1987, they started Arcadi Enterprises which Vince ran with Pat by his side until his retirement after heart problems in 2015. Vince and Pat celebrated 30 years of marriage together and had three children.