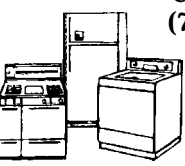


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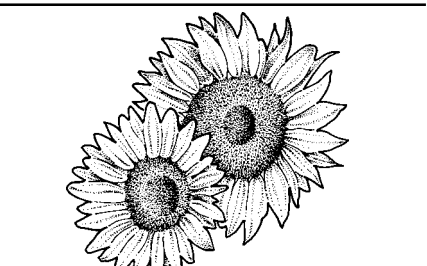

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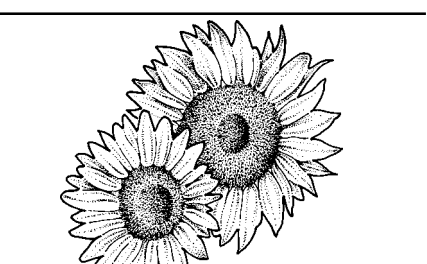
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READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Lexi David and Brandon Sissel wrapped a gift at the Goodland Churches Thrift Shop with help and suggestions from Jo Simmons, manager of the store. The youngsters helped Simmons wrap gifts to give to their fellow volunteers at a Christmas party Monday, Dec. 22, to thank the volunteers for their help. Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

Community helps children afford Christmas gifts

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Churches Thrift Shop sold over 600 Christmas gifts Saturday, Dec. 13, in the Kids Christmas Shoppe and has continued to sell gifts. The shop had drawings for Christmas decorations each week in December.

Volunteers helped to get things ready for the special shoppe and helped on that day. Individuals and organizations donated items and money to help Thrift Shop Manager Jo Simmons to pull off the special shoppe and to help children who could not afford their gifts.

"It was a team effort," Simmons said. "I couldn't be any more proud of those who volunteered time and talents."

Besides helping children afford to shop, the thrift store got other returns. Five of the volunteers from that Saturday have stayed on as permanent helpers, and the store had two big days of sales.

The day of the Christmas shoppe was the store's biggest sales day, Simmons said, and the following Tuesday, when the remaining Christmas gifts were available to the public, was almost as big. And the store continued to sell gift items until Christmas Eve.

The store has had drawings each week for Christmas decorations. Marlene Fisher won a Christmas tree picture; Karen Rodriguez won a four-foot fiber optic Christmas tree; Janet Swartz won a Christmas centerpiece; and Melanie King from Missouri, who shopped at the store while visiting a cousin in Goodland, won a musical wreath.

Autumn Johnson won a stuffed reindeer, and Allison Rice won a teddy bear with its own puppy in the special drawing for kids during the Christmas shoppe.

Besides the individuals and organizations that donated money and items for the shoppe, Simmons said, about 30 volunteers showed up Thursday and Friday to organize and mark merchandise. And many volun-

teered Saturday to help wrap gifts, help children shop and restock shelves.

"I just can't get over how the community has responded," Simmons said. "It really makes you feel good to think about that, the community coming together to help others."

Residents at the Good Samaritan Center and clients of Golden West Skills Center cleaned and dressed dolls and cut gift tags from Christmas cards. Residents of Wheat Ridge Acres cleaned and dressed dolls and cleaned toys; volunteers from the senior center cleaned toys; and students in Ardy Showalter's family and consumer sciences class made gift baskets.

Comfort Inn, Super 8 and Buffalo Inn donated coffee for gift baskets, and Golden West donated soap boxes for personal care baskets. People in the community donated new cosmetics. Churches, Kiwanis and Rotary donated money for items for the gift baskets, batteries, wrapping paper, candles and miscellaneous.

First National Bank provided shredded paper for the baskets; Goodland Regional Medical Center provided boxes and packing supplies; and Fitzgibbon's Inc. gave the shoppe the use of its store for gift wrapping space.

Amy Wright and family donated the dog and the reindeer given away in the drawing.

Two anonymous donors gave money in

case some children couldn't afford all their gifts. At least 24 children were helped.

Lexi David, Melissa Schritter, Maria Rodriguez, Angie Medrano and Britney Medrano helped on Saturday and then agreed to volunteer for one night a week permanently.

Other volunteers were Mary Schippert, Deanna Currie, Beverly Hurd, Barbara Springsteen, Wanda Schritter, Holton Witman, Brandon Sissel, Bill Hartzler, Taylor Tomsic, Joan Finders, Lynn Swayne, Annette Fairbanks, Jean Windell, Mary Ellen Coumerihl, Lacy Potterf, Rachel Potterf, Amy Wright, Lisa Lockhart, Denise Floyd, Sister Barbara Berthiaume, Lorna Thorpe, Christi Walls, Kathy Lammers, Teresa David, Kathy Briney, Carol Gattshall, Dorothy Akers, Ruth Ontiveroz, Deb Boyle, LaVaughn Becker, Judy McKee, Linda Chaffin, Anita Coleman, Randy Coleman, Gail Walters, Betty Rethmann, Sherry Ketter, Kathryn Wedermeyer, Vange Balik, Brenda Moss, Violet Peters, Katie Lammers, Amber Walls, Olivia Lovington, Lou Ann Medrano, Melissa Lazo and Tika Hall.

Members of the thrift store board are President Deb Boyle, Vice President Roger Collins, Secretary David Branda, Treasurer LaVaughn Becker, Judy McKee, the Rev. Bob Snyder, Anita Coleman and Linda Chaffin.

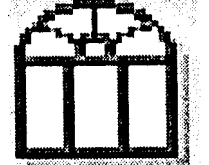


LaVaughn Becker, treasurer of the thrift shop, restocked the shelves at the thrift store after Christmas shoppers cleared out some of the merchandise.

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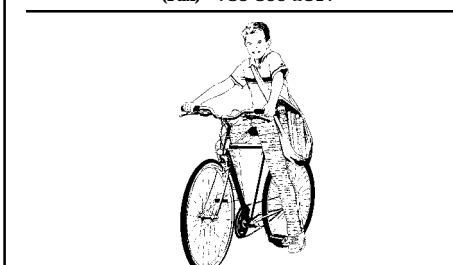
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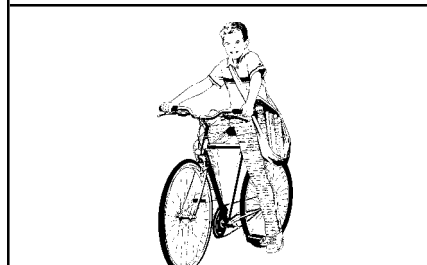


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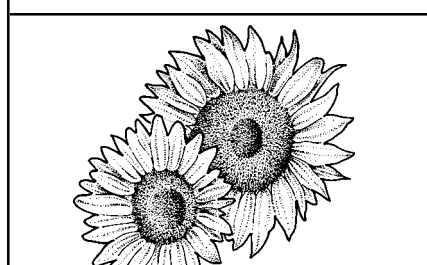

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