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City of Wylie Public Information Office

EDITORIAL

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Volunteers Bring Holiday Cheer to Needy Families

Imagine waking up Christmas morning and not finding any gifts under the tree. That is the reality for many area children and families.

Reach for a Star, the City of Wylie's gift assistance program, brings smiles to children and families by providing new clothes and toys. The program assists families of children who live in Wylie or attend the Wylie Independent School District that otherwise would not be able to provide Christmas for their children. This year, with your help, close to 500 children from 195 families will have gifts to open Christmas morning.

Pick up a star(s) between November 10 and December 14 at City Hall or other Reach for a Star locations throughout the City of Wylie. Purchase three of the gifts listed on the tag and drop off the new gifts by December 14 to Wylie Fire-Rescue Administration; the three story building located at 801-A S. Hwy. 78, Suite #204, adjacent to Brookshires.

City Staff and volunteers accepted and reviewed applications from needy families during a one day event at the First Baptist Wylie Events Center on October 9. The stars were created and distributed on trees at more than 20 locations. The donated gifts will be organized at the Wylie National Guard Armory for a one-day pick-up on December 22. The success of the program is based on more than 600 volunteer hours from over 60 City Staff, Citizen Police Academy and Boy Scout volunteers.

"It's a lot of work and long hours, but you get wrapped up in the stories...they hit home", says Cheryl Smith, Wylie Fire-Rescue Administrative Support Supervisor and Reach for a Star Coordinator. "Single moms who have lost their jobs, dads who have become disabled, death in the family, health issues, the list goes on and on. Moms and dads just want to see their kids eyes light up on Christmas morning."

Each year, many stars are picked up by citizens with good intentions, but toys are not returned, three gifts are not purchased per child, or some stars are simply not picked up. City staff is committed to making sure every child accepted into the program has a merry Christmas.

Watch for several events to help raise the needed funds to purchase toys. Firemen will be out in force during the December 4 Arts Festival, Parade and Tree Lighting for a Fill the Boot campaign. The annual Woodbridge Country Club Reach for a Star golf tournament is scheduled for December 2 and December 7. Call 972-429-5100 for details. All proceeds from the tournament go to Reach for a Star. And the most unique fundraising event of all is a 24 Hour Workout by Assistant City Manager, Jeff Butters and Assistant Planner, Jason Haskens.

This year help a child's wish come true. Consider picking up stars for a whole family; or commit your work or church to purchasing gifts for several families. If you do not have the time to shop for gifts, consider a donation and volunteers will do the shopping.

For more information on the Reach for a Star program, to make a donation, or to adopt a large number of stars, contact Cheryl Smith, 972-941-8961.