

Podcast Episode 392: Toys for Tots Drive

SPEAKERS

Pete Anderson, Kathy Lindstrom

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Kathy Lindstrom 00:00

Hello Sun City Shadow Hills, this is board member Kathy Lindstrom. And today we have Pete Anderson in here. And Pete has been the president of the Veterans Club. And he's going to be here to tell us about Toys for Tots. What we're doing now to gather toys for children of service members. We've been doing this here at Sun City Shadow Hills. So since 2010, and Pete take it away and tell us about Toys for Tots here in Shadow Hills.

Pete Anderson 00:30

All right. Thank you, Kathy. Well, just a little history and a lot of people don't probably don't know this about Toys for Tots. But the Toys for Tots first started in 1947. And Major Bill Hendricks from the Marine Corps was the one that started it. And he and his wife were the ones that really got the project going as far as collecting toys. In 1947 and 48 was the first big year of the Toys for Tots. Kind of interesting in 1948, Walt Disney was the one that designed the Toys for Tots boxes. And now that you see the boxes all over the community, you'll see the Toys for Tots logo. But Walt Disney was the one that designed the boxes with that logo. Now interestingly enough, in 1956, Bob Hope, John Wayne, Doris Day Laurie Morgan, Tim Allen, Kenny Rogers, Billy Ray, and Nancy Reagan really got involved. And they were the ones that promoted it throughout the country, and let the Marines spread it throughout. Originally, they were only doing it in their bases and places close. But after all of them, and Nancy Reagan really got involved, she was the one then that opened it up to the entire country. So that's where it really started.

Pete Anderson 02:04

Now we started to hear in 2010. And our first year that we started, it was just the boxes in the Montecito Clubhouse. But then we got involved with the Shadow Hills High School, and the Marines. And the Marines would come and help us and we put boxes throughout the entire community. At one time, we had over 15 boxes around. Now this year, we only have seven. Part of that is the Marines because of what's going on in the world. All of the Marines that I had that were friends of mine, and also friends of the community, they really helped the high school get involved in it. And then that's high school really got involved. And so between the high school and Sun City Shadow Hills, we collected enough toys and to kind of give you an idea how many we collected over the years, and we'd have the high school come when the Marines would come and pick up the toys. We would have the high school band and their choir, come and sing and do that. And then we would have about 20 Marines that would be here. And also in be very involved in it. Just to give you an idea that potluck dinner in 19 or 2019 and 20 before the COVID really hit, we collected 2500 toys, and think about that 2500 toys in 2021. In 2020, we collected 1990 So as the years went on, we continued to collect more toys.

Pete Anderson 04:11

Now one of our main concerns and this was one of the things that I had to cross with the with the Marines. Where did the toys go? At one time in the very beginning of this, the toys went up north to 29 palms and they were spread out there. Well, we disagreed with that. We wanted the toys were collected here to stay in the valley.

Kathy Lindstrom 04:39

Excellent.

Pete Anderson 04:39

So I got a hold of the head Marine with the Toys for Tots program and talk to him and what they've done now is they have a warehouse in Cathedral City where they store all the Toys for Tots boxes in California in Southern California in this area. up. And then what they do, interestingly enough, several days before Christmas, they invite families. So it'd be Mom and Dad, and the children by age that would come in, and the Marines have already separated the toys, by male, female, boy, girl, and so forth, and have it all set up. So Mom and Dad would come in with a boy 10 and a girl 11, they would come in, and they could walk through and pick the toys that they wanted. So all of the toys that we collect here at Sun City Shadow Hills now stay in the valley. And they go to our people in that in the Valley all the way from Indio down to Coachella to Palm Springs, all throughout the Indio area. And it's, that's one of the things that I really feel that we did a good job on, by having all the toys stay here and got an opportunity to definitely make sure that the toys went to our local kids.

Kathy Lindstrom 06:10

Well, I understand we've already filled the boxes for a first round, and they're already been emptied and stored. And we're wanting to fill those up again. And I think we should aim for over 2000, if we had 2500 in 2019, we're going we're still going up now again after COVID. And we should have been able to do that as a community to donate those toys. Now what I'm wondering is if you can't get out and get a toy, and you don't know where to go, can you donate cash? Pete?

Pete Anderson 06:45

No, we cannot collect cash.

Kathy Lindstrom 06:47

Okay.

Pete Anderson 06:48

It's strictly toys. And when that program was originally put together, it was strictly toys, because they were concerned about getting cash at that point. And they wanted to make sure. And the problem being with cash is it has a way of disappearing.

Kathy Lindstrom 07:04

Ah, yes.

Pete Anderson 07:05

Where toys in most cases are pretty safe. I mean, I don't see a 47 year old man taking a doll for a woman is that 10 or 11 years old. But it's so that has been very good about staying just with toys.

Kathy Lindstrom 07:23

Well, we have Target here and we have Walmart, those are easy places to go and pick up a toy. And they're to be unwrapped toys. Is that correct?

Pete Anderson 07:31

Correct, unwrapped. Do not wrap any of the toys. And ages and interestingly enough, the last group we had five bicycles.

Kathy Lindstrom 07:42

Nice.

Kathy Lindstrom 07:43

And occasionally you'll find some of these stores will have a special on bicycles, two wheeled bicycles, and they're \$99. So it's not like it's a big deal. But we don't have a single toy as of this as of this date yet. But we will, before it comes time, and we pick up the toys. The Marines will come and pick up the toys on December 16. On the 16th, the Marines will be here to pick up everything and the Veterans Club will get them all out front of the Montecito. And what we'll do is we'll get an email out to everybody. If you'd like to come and watch the Marines pick them up and put it in the trucks. And then they'll take it to the warehouse in in Cathedral City.

Kathy Lindstrom 08:35

Well, it's a great, it's a great way for us to share our Christmas. And we have Thanksgiving because we're living in such a great town right now and such a great community. And it gives us an opportunity to share with those who are less fortunate. So I invite everybody to go out to you can even go to places like CVS or Walgreens and pick up toys. They have toys there. But we've got Walmart, and we've got Target. They're the best places with the best selection. And it's usually really easy to get the baby toys and the little kid toys. Those older kids would like something to do you have any suggestions Pete on that?

Pete Anderson 09:19

Yeah, that, well, that's why I mentioned the bikes. Because it seemed that one year we had 15 bikes, and the Marines had a lot of fun, because they'd come in and they'd ride them all around out in front of the amount of the Montecito, but so, and tricycles think about tricycles and think about some of the little model cars that kids can get in and ride around in now. So any of that certainly makes sense.

Kathy Lindstrom 09:45

I know scooters are big too.

Pete Anderson 09:47

Yeah, scooters are big at the moment to do so. So and I appreciate this community, being supportive of this and you think back and I look back and see the number of toys that we've collected over the years it's been amazing. This year of course it's following up after COVID, but let's hope that we can start getting more toys, so.

Kathy Lindstrom 10:11

Pete, there is another question where are the boxes located here in Sun City?

Pete Anderson 10:15

Okay in most cases what we do is we put a box in all of the fitness centers. So, the big one at Montecito of course I'll have a box there. There will be one in the front of the Montecito in and it's right now it's backed by the Christmas tree. If you come into the Montecito, you'll see the Christmas tree and we'll actually put two there. There's we're sitting in the Santa Rosa clubhouse now, and there's one here right in front when you come in to work out. And there's also one in the pro shop both pro shops on the Montecito, I mean on the pro shop to play the south course and the north course, one there and at the Shadows. There's one at the Shadows, right by the Christmas tree. And then there's one at the pro shop here for the north course. Of course, the north course isn't open at the moment, but it'll be open next week. And so, when it does that, that box will be here also.

Kathy Lindstrom 11:18

Oh, great opportunity. You've got the places to shop, got the boxes where they're located, and Sun City come on out and fill those boxes time and time again. Let's make a bunch of kids happy this year. Thank you so much.

Pete Anderson 11:32

And Merry Christmas.