

## Christmas Wishes Granted

Sunday, 26 December 2004

For Immediate Release:

POC: Dwight Walton

561-906-6577 or 561-665-0151

December 26, 2004

DELRAY BEACH -All Johanna Abraham wanted for Christmas was a Barbie doll. And when Santa Claus arrived at a gathering for kids in her after school program on Christmas Eve, inside his bag of goodies was her doll.

"How did he know what I wanted?" the Johanna, 10, asked as she sported a sheepish smile from one ear to the other. "I didn't tell anyone, not even my mother."

It may appear that the jolly old fellow knew what Johanna and most of the dozens of kids wanted, as each one went home with the gift of his or her choice.

"Instead of giving each kid a gift, I let them pick one from my bag," St. Nick, aka Robert Prestwidge, said. "After all, it's for the kids, so by doing it this way, it ensures they will get something they like."

More than 50 kids from the nonprofit Children Learning in After-School Sessions program received presents on the eve of Christmas as part of the Wishes and Dreams toy giveaway program, sponsored by the Knights of Pythagoras Mentoring Network. Santa also left several behind for other kids in the neighborhood.

The giveaway was held in the Delray Beach home of Frances Carter, a retired educator who runs the program.

Before arriving at the home at 6 p.m. promptly, Santa rode through the Delray Estates subdivision, where he handed out gifts to some families. Families were selected to receive gifts either by people in the community or referrals from patrol officers.

Parent Frantz Dorcelin of Delray Estates was moved by the gifts.

"This is my dreams answered," he said. "I bought them some clothes and school things because they needed these things but I could not afford toys."

The presents were donated by the Florida Highway Patrol and the Towing for Tots organization.

Inside Carter's living room, Santa sat, surrounded by a mountain of toys - teddy bears and dolls, remote-control cars and kitchen play sets, guitars and other pricey gifts.

For two hours, kids braved the rain and chilly temperatures to see the man they had been looking forward to. Each child walked up to him, had his or her photos taken, and whispered to him what he or she wanted for Christmas.

If he did not have the gift with him, Santa granted them their second wish, and promised to add the other gift to his list for next year.

“It’s so nice because it makes the kids excited,” Carter said. “For a lot of these kids, this is all they will get for Christmas.”

For more information on the Knights of Pythagoras Mentoring Network, call 561-665-0151 or e-mail [info@kopmn.org](mailto:info@kopmn.org)

The Knights of Pythagoras Mentoring Network provides mentoring, peer leadership and field trips for boys ages 7 to 17 in Palm Beach and Broward counties. It encourages academic success and stewardship among its young charges.