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Loudoun LINKed to Christmas

By Kristie Little
 12/20/2000

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The members of LINK bring miracles to families in need.

LINK, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization of 17 churches in the Eastern Loudoun and Herndon areas, brought the Christmas spirit to 279 families during their holiday basket distribution on Saturday at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church in Sterling.

Thanks to the success of LINK volunteers' toy drive, 717 children will have a better Christmas.

Two families in particular are grateful for the support of LINK.

Susie Acero of Sterling arrived Saturday with her daughter Hanna, age 5.

Hanna received a bike for Christmas and toys for two younger siblings and herself.

The Aceros also received more than a week's worth of food from LINK.

Acero is from Peru and speaks little English, but "thank you" was one phrase she used over and over again.

"I don't know how to say thank you (enough)," said Acero.

Herndon resident Janelle Alston and her two children have similar feelings about LINK.

"I appreciate this a lot," said Alston, "It's Christmas time and (my kids) will be happy."

Alston's son DeJawn also received a bike for Christmas, courtesy of Bikes for Tykes.


Velda Flemming, Alson's mother, also sings LINK's praises.

"Christmas was not looking too great this year," said Flemming, "so this is awesome."

Flemming also remarked on the involvement of younger volunteers, "It's good for kids to help other kids. It helps them to learn humility, and they realize that they really are blessed (to have what they do.)"

Volunteers are the heart and helping hands of LINK. One hundred and ten volunteers came out Saturday and worked until 5 p.m. to provide every family with food for the holidays.

"Everyone is having a ball doing it," said Dave Suomi of Sterling. "It's been really rewarding to see all of the young people come and help out."

 Times-Mirror Staff Photo/Heather S. Hughes
 MMMM...CAPT'N CRUNCH: Hanna Acero gets to pick out her own cereal from the cereal table. LINK volunteers spent a week separating food into categories.

Times-Mirror Staff Photo/Heather S. Hughes

MMMM...CAPT'N CRUNCH: Hanna Acero gets to pick out her own cereal from the cereal table. LINK volunteers spent a week separating food into categories.

LINK organizes emergency food distribution all year long. To volunteer, call 703-378-4273. Contact LINK at 703-437-1776 to apply to receive food.

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