



ToyMakers of East Lake

"Making Smiles One Toy at a Time"



Toy Stories

Winter 2016 by Dan Pearch

In September, the ToyMakers of East Lake delivered over 3,000 toys to 19 different clients and agencies. Among these was Sallie House, "a safe haven for children, infant to seventeen years of age, who have been removed from their home because of abuse or neglect, or – even abandonment. Children may stay there as long as needed – for a few hours or several months – until they can be safely reunited with parents, placed with relatives, taken into a foster home, or adopted by a loving family." When they arrive at this shelter, children often have little more than the clothes on their back. The simple toys furnished by ToyMakers of East Lake can often ease their transition during this emotionally trying time. In December, we delivered another 4,000 toys bringing our 2016 total deliveries to over 14,000 toys – our best year ever!



Update: ToyMakers of East Lake's improved and updated dust collection system is installed and operational! Far more efficient and powerful than the system that it replaced, we can already observe a noticeable improvement in the work environment and the cleanliness around the machines. This major upgrade was made possible, in part, with help from Filters Plus owner Tom Waites, as well as his sons Nick and Andy, who were instrumental in the installation. Also, a key contributor of personal labor, material and expertise to this project was Mike Nettler of Donaldson Company. Finally, a significant portion of the materials for this project were provided by a key partner profiled below, Millwork 360.

Partner Profile: Millwork 360

Tucked away, near the western border of Hillsborough county, is a family-owned business that specializes in manufacturing a superior quality line of wood mouldings and doors. These products, made by Millwork 360, are used by professional contractors in a wide variety of residential and commercial construction applications. Within their 80,000 square foot production and office facility, Millwork 360's fifty employees consume, on average, 225,000 board feet per month, of premium hardwoods and softwoods. During the normal course of manufacturing, the inevitable "cut-offs" of wood occur. Millwork 360's short cut-offs are the ToyMakers of East Lake's lifeblood!



This partner diligently sets their wood cut-offs aside for us to pick up, so that our volunteers can lovingly fashion them into Batmobiles, Princess Cars, Ice Cream Trucks, Fire Engines, Sharks, and Turtles. Even though these toys may be made from the finest poplar, oak, walnut or mahogany, the children receiving them seldom know (or care), since the toys are completely covered in brightly colored paints. Because wood is our primary raw material for the body of a toy, this steady supply from Mike Williams and his team at Millwork 360 allows ToyMakers of East Lake to produce toy bodies at a minimum cost. As a result, the solid maple wheels and decals are the most expensive components for most toys!

Millwork 360 was also very generous in assisting us with materials for our new dust collection system. They donated a substantial portion of the ductwork pictured above. It is hard to overstate the important role that Millwork 360 plays in allowing ToyMakers of East Lake to achieve our mission of "Making smiles one toy at a time".

On Saturday, November 5th, ToyMakers of East Lake hosted their annual Open House and Silent Auction. Tours were given of our toyshop and games and toy car races were enjoyed by the kids. In addition, our friends from East Lake Fire Rescue offered rides on their antique fire truck. It was a great time of fun and fellowship!

Those who like to organize their year-end financial planning in advance are reminded that your donations to ToyMakers of East Lake are fully tax-deductible. We have no paid officers or staff, and 100% of all administration and labor is provided by volunteers. Your tax-deductible donations go toward covering such costs as toy making materials, building & machine maintenance, utilities, new equipment, decorative toy decals, bits, blades, wheels, dowels and shop supplies.

www.toymakersofeastlake.org