



ToyMakers of East Lake

"Making Smiles One Toy at a Time"



Toy Stories

Fall 2018 by Dan Pearch

ToyMakers' Open House, Shop Tour, and Silent Auction

In early November, the ToyMakers of East Lake held their fifth annual Open House, with tremendous support from a wide array of sponsors, suppliers, first responders, volunteers, and the community as a whole. The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office put on an impressive K-9 demonstration, there were a variety of games for kids of all ages, and the food was plentiful. The hundreds of visitors got an early jump on their Christmas shopping, by bidding on the wide assortment of crafts, entertainment, adventures and more, that were offered at the silent auction.

Many of our family members, and the community, enjoyed touring our workshop and seeing the process of how our volunteers are able to create so many different toys out of donated surplus lumber, which then gets hand-crafted with love.

A Record Year for Toy Distribution

ToyMakers are busily packing up the last of our toys for delivery in 2018! This process is overseen by volunteer Theresa Burke, a former mail carrier for the U.S. Postal Service. Orchestrating the smooth inventorying and distribution of over 80 different designs of toys is a true test of her organizational skills. A dedicated corps of drivers will log hundreds of miles in their personal vehicles to deliver these toys to our recipient partners. In 2018, we will have delivered over 19,000 toys to over 40 hospitals, clinics, shelters, social service agencies, first responders, and more. Also, by the end of this year, we will have placed at least 650 refurbished bicycles with needy recipients, including veterans, job seekers, foster and under-privileged children.



In addition, ToyMakers always tries to respond when crises occur. After Haiti was devastated by an earthquake in 2010, we shipped toys down with mission's teams to aid in the recovery. Most recently, a coalition of volunteer groups from the Clearwater area gathered relief supplies for the victims of hurricane Michael, which struck the Florida panhandle in October of this year. ToyMakers sent along toys which were handed out to the youngest victims, many of whom had lost everything. We often point out that none of our brightly painted toys require batteries, which are often hard to come by in these shattered regions.

For our friends who might still be considering a year-end, tax-deductible, charitable donation, be assured that your gift to the ToyMakers of East Lake will achieve maximum impact. We continue to be an all volunteer non-profit organization, with no paid officers or staff. If you should choose to bless us with a donation, you can do so through our website (www.toymakersofeastlake.org) to donate by PayPal or Credit Card. Checks may be mailed to ToyMakers of East Lake, 2690 Tanglewood Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34685.

Wishing each of you a safe and joyous holiday season.

Merry Christmas from the ToyMakers of East Lake!

