

'It's the highlight of our year'

Students deliver toys to Raphael Clinic as part of annual drive

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On Monday morning, National Honor Society students from Our Lady of the Hills Regional Catholic High School delivered more than 100 toys to the Raphael Community Free Clinic on Water Street as part of the school's fourth annual toy drive.

Also on Monday, the NHS sponsored a blood drive for the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the OLH gymnasium.

Starting the Monday after Thanksgiving, the Raphael Clinic will invite parents who

MORE INFO

► Those interested in making a donation or volunteering at the clinic should call the Raphael Clinic at 830-895-4201.

visit the clinic to pick out items for each child for Christmas.

Toys, clothing and blankets are available. Clothing was donated by many individuals within the community and volunteers at the clinic, said office manager and volunteer

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From left are Ken Zysko, executive director of the Raphael Clinic; Mikayla Grocki, senior and National Honor Society president at Our Lady of the Hills Regional Catholic High School; Therese Schwarz, OLH principal; Ileana Scoccia, OLH senior; Ella Junker, OLH senior; Mason Sirianni, OLH senior.

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coordinator Joyce Horat.

The "Be Joyful Bee," a Hill Country quilt guild based out of Zion Lutheran Church, donated many of the blankets, and volunteers from Kerrville's First Christian Church made stuffed animals and donated coloring books.

Two weeks ago, the NHS announced to the school community that they would be collecting toys for the clinic, said Ella Junker, a senior at OLH.

Each class was assigned a different age group for whom

to bring a toy, added her classmate Ileana Scoccia.

Overall, between 100 and 200 toys were collected and donated.

"(OLH students and families) have been so generous," said Horat. "This is what I call the future of America. It gives you hope."

Principal Therese Schwarz noted that she and the entire OLH community were happy to help.

"It is a joy to be able to help the local families and bring joy on Christmas morning," she said. "This is a gift for us as well to be able to collect these toys, knowing they will soon be in the hands of little ones in Kerrville."

NHS president, senior

Mikayla Grocki, said helping others during the holiday season is a priority for her.

"Knowing I've helped a bunch of kids receive gifts, just knowing you can help someone, it makes me feel good inside," she said.

Ken Zysko, executive director of the clinic, added that he is grateful for the donations.

"We just love the fact that we are able to do what we are as far as us getting gifts to people. It's the highlight of our year," he said. "But if it weren't for the volunteers here, we wouldn't be able to do it."

He noted that the clinic is always in need of volunteers to do clerical work,

particularly filing and answering the phones.

"Even half an hour a week goes a long way," he said.

According to Zysko, the clinic accepts donations of toys or children's clothing for the drive all year long, often receiving donations in the springtime and summertime when winter clothing goes on sale.

Those interested in making a donation or volunteering at the clinic should call the Raphael Clinic at 830-895-4201.