

Sunday, December 17, 2006

Children get bikes in Reynolds' memory

By Lindsay Holland

Reporter

Sunday, December 17, 2006

When Nathan Dillinger woke up Saturday morning he had no idea that a big Christmas present was going to come early this year.

Nathan, along with 20 other children, received a new bike at Helen Davis School, compliments of the Mark J. Reynolds Memorial Children's "First" Bicycle Fund. He said he couldn't believe they knew his favorite color was green as he traced the green-lined seat and fenders with his finger, describing the design as snake-like.

For the past three Christmases, the Mark J. Reynolds Memorial has given out more than \$50,000 in bikes to children who couldn't afford one.

The practice was started by the late Mr. Reynolds, a St. Joseph native, when he lived in California. He regularly worked with local churches to find children in need and provide them with new bikes. Dona Reynolds decided to continue her son's work after he died in a biking accident near his home in 2004.

Angela Dillinger said they received a letter a few weeks ago that her son Nathan would be receiving a new bike.

"It's very neat that they're doing all this for these kids," Ms. Dillinger said. "There are a lot of happy faces around here. It's good to see that."

The bikes are not only given to children who can't afford to buy them, but also to children with special needs. These children often require special three-wheeled bikes with wide seats and harnesses.

Dora Brudin's son, John, received one of the specialized bikes. Ten-year-old John didn't waste time figuring out how to ride it, and his younger brother, Thomas, rode in the basket attached to the back.

"This is awesome. These people are great," Ms. Brudin said. "I couldn't afford this specialized bike."

Before distributing the bikes, Ms. Reynolds addressed the 75 people who had gathered in the Helen Davis School gym to tell them about her son's love for bikes and the joy it gave him to donate bikes at Christmas.

Ms. Reynolds said kids with special needs have as much of a right to new bikes as any other children.

"People forget that kids who have disabilities are still kids," Ms. Reynolds said. "They are the ones that will really enjoy these bikes."

To promote safe cycling, free helmets were handed out as well.

For more information on the foundation, or to make a donation, visit www.markreynoldsfund.org.

Related Links