



“For unto us a child is born, for unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Luke 9:6 (KJV)

## *Lifelines Outreach*

*Newsletter for December 2012*

### **You'd Have To See It To Believe It! - Lou Heath**

One day about this time of year the phone rang at my office. A father with three young boys wanted me to help him find a solution to a problem. Each of his boys had given him a long list of presents they wanted for Christmas. As a new Christian, the father was afraid his sons were getting the wrong idea about what Christmas really meant. “Do you know an organization that would let us give gifts to some needy children?” He wanted to involve the boys in shopping, wrapping gifts, making cookies for refreshments, and spending time with the children receiving the gifts. The father was willing to spend about \$100.00 for each child. The first place I called only wanted the money. That would defeat the purpose the father had in mind.

The Headmaster at the Tennessee School for the Blind was a member of our church. I asked if we could purchase clothing and a toy for 10 of the needy students. He readily agreed and after the students were chosen, we went to the school, met the students and helped measure them to get sizes for clothing to purchase. The boys helped with shopping, wrapping the presents, and making cookies for refreshments. The school gave us a little corner of the gym for our party. There were a variety of activities going on and children wanting to be included in what we were doing.

The second year we invited a couple of families to join with us and convinced the school we should do it at the church. We took 14 students. Since we were at the church we could share the story of Jesus' birth with the children. The favorite experience that year was about a boy who received a coat. He smelled the coat and laid it aside. He didn't try the coat on or ask any questions about it. The young man sitting with him asked about the coat. The boy tearfully said, “I smelled the coat. I know it is new. I have never had a new coat and I knew I wouldn't be allowed to keep it.”

The third year when we were making plans, we decided that the joy and blessings we received were too good not to share with others.



*Taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.  
Psalm 34:8*

We got permission from the pastor to set up a tree with ornaments that listed one thing a child needed. (Every student needed about 8 or 10 basic items of clothing. We suggested one toy or special gift). The school chose 20 students. The second Sunday every ornament had been taken. Families signed up to sit with a child. Many families used the same idea of the first father by having their children be a part of the activities. Some of those children are now using the same plan to not only provide for less fortunate children, but to teach a life lesson.

It is one thing to give money to a worthy cause and a totally different one when you give time and funds and share face-to-face with the beneficiary.

Only God knows how many blind children have benefited from open hearts of adults and children. Some years as many as 45 children received needed clothing, love, and attention. Perhaps even more wonderful is how this special time has affected many adults and children who have learned the joy of sharing the true meaning of Christmas. Parents have shared how their children empty their piggy banks or ask for jobs to earn money to buy gifts for their special blind friend.

Thirty-four years have gone by since that first party. You would have had to participate in the party last night to see the look on the faces of children and adults to get a glimpse of the joy that filled the whole room. An exchange student from Africa opened a package with tennis shoes. He hugged the shoes to his chest and whispered, "I have shoes! I have new shoes!" Stephen said, "This must be how Heaven will be. Thank you to everyone who had a part in this special night!"

I am sure Dr. Ben had no idea what he started when he asked for help in a lesson of the true meaning of Christmas for his own children. I know this: God has a plan to keep this ministry alive and He is not through as long as there are needy children at T.S.B. We cared for 32 children this year and there are more that we will provide clothing for before Christmas day this year. *-Lou Heath*

***I asked Lou to share the story of the Blind School Christmas party. It has been 34 years since a need was met that created a great ministry. Lifelines is 15 years old and still going strong, meeting needs, and sharing Jesus. Find a need this Christmas season and God may perform a miracle in your life you were not expecting. May Christmas be a joy filled time for your family. Keep praying for us as we continue to seek God's best. Remember to read your Bible and to pray everyday! -Richard Gay.***

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