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WKU Greek Orgs wrap gifts for 34 Parker-Bennett-Curry students

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Delta Sigma Theta seniors Serenity Haskins (right) and Morgan Wynne v community gather in the Downing Student Union during the third-annu: Grace Ramey/grace.ramey@bgdailynews.com

The sounds of Bing Crosby lilted across Downing Student Union as dozens of Western Kentucky University students busily wrapped footballs, plushies, sweaters and coloring books.

WKU's Greek Organizations, around 30 in total, came together Tuesday for the culmination of the Christmas Angel program — preparing gifts for 34 Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary students.

WKU's Associate Director of Student Activities Andrew Rash said the third-annual event is a chance to give back to the community while bringing students together for some holiday cheer.



“For a long time, I had wanted to do an event that brought all three of our councils and our chapters together,” Rash said. “Christmas is something we can all get behind — giving gifts to some deserving kids (and) helping make their Christmas is something we can all get behind.”

Rash, looking around at the room full of wrappers, said he's impressed with how many students take the event personally.

"They get the gifts, they bring them in here, they're wrapping," Rash said. "For a lot of them, it's kind of fun, because they're just doing some festive Christmas stuff that's making a difference."

Sarah Minix, Parker-Bennet-Curry's family resource coordinator, said over 200 kids make up their list of Christmas Angel recipients. Students are chosen or recommended based on need and the resource center partners with sponsors across the community.

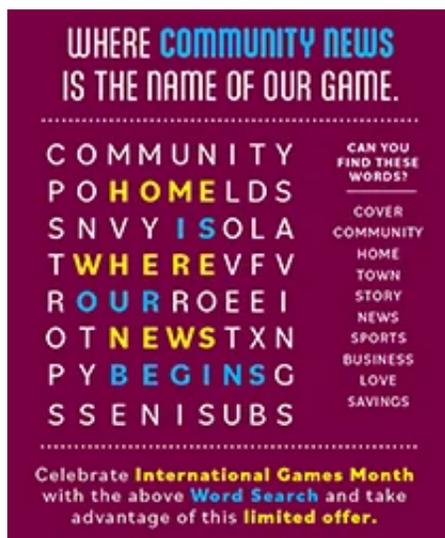
Minix said Crossland Community Church, Next Level Church, Hope House Ministries and other community partners help make sure every child gets sponsored. If any children aren't sponsored, Minix scours local businesses, friends, teachers and more to find someone who will.

"Between this year and last year, I have not once had a kiddo that wasn't picked up," Minix said.

Minix said along with providing things kids want and need, the event also brings joy to kids who may otherwise miss a visit from Santa.

"Every child wants to have a Christmas, so it's nice for them to be able to wake up and feel like every other kid in the community," Minix said. "We don't want them to come

to school and have to talk to another child that has received gifts when they haven't."



Each organization is provided a student's name, a list of “needs” like school supplies and warm clothes and a list of “wants” like toys, games, trinkets and more, purchased through donations or out of the organization’s budget. They’re also given a set of interests, ranging from sports to princesses to video games and more.

WKU volunteers will travel to Parker-Bennet-Curry on Dec. 6 to hand gifts off to parents.

Senior Harrison Snyder is a graduate assistant at Student Activities, a former treasurer for WKU’s Intrafraternity Council and a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity. Snyder helped gather supplies for the wrapping and made sure students had what they needed at the event.

“It feels awesome. You can really feel the Christmas spirit with everybody together,” Snyder said. “(The location) is a great venue for it as well, just a big room where

everybody's in one spot and can come together more than we have in years passed.”

Samantha Bodemann and Valerie King, senior students representing the Panhellenic Council as president and secretary, respectively. Bodemann belongs to Chi Omega sorority while King is a member of Delta Zeta.

The pair oversaw a table filled with unicorn coloring books and toys for their 7-year-old student.

“As a whole, all the Greek organizations on campus hold service as an important part of their organization,” Bodemann said. “This is just another way we can give back to Bowling Green and the community and also come together just as friends and people in different organizations for something like this.”

For students graduating in December, the event may be one of their last memories of their college experience.

“It's really nice to come together during the holidays and do something like this together, especially because Valerie's graduating in December, it's like her last hurrah,” Bodemann said.

Both hail from Louisville and said events like this help them put down roots locally.

“Especially as two seniors that have lived in Bowling Green for almost four years now, we feel such a connection to the community that I see this as like a

second home,” King said.



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