

# Employees play Santa's helpers

By Lori Jones  
Special Writer

The holiday advertisements tug at our heartstrings featuring happy, multi-generational families, warm homes and hearths, big feasts and a twinkling tree with piles of gifts underneath.

The reality is, unfortunately, that for many people, the holidays don't look like this at all. Due to poverty or circumstance, the holiday season could just be another group of days, made tougher and lonelier because there are no families,

make this holiday a little more comfortable for children, families and seniors in need throughout Michigan.

At FTD Florists, headquartered in Southfield, Sandi Dudek organizes and coordinates Operation Good Cheer, a program sponsored by Child and Family Services of Michigan, Inc. Like many children this time of year, children in foster care have wishes too. The volunteers who participate in Operation Good Cheer play Santa's helpers and make those wishes come true.

Dudek, a company accountant, brought the employee-driven program to her co-workers at FTD in 1991 on short notice when a friend of hers who works with Child and Family Services needed some last-minute Santas. About a week and a half before the gifts needed to be shipped out,

Dudek volunteered to take two wish lists and see if she could get those wishes fulfilled. There was no time to advertise the program in a company bulletin but

through word of mouth alone, employees stepped forward and fulfilled not only the two lists, but 31 more that year.

Lisa Evans, an accountant and member of the Employee Activities Committee, says that the reason she thinks employees participate is that "No matter what your circumstances, there's always someone less fortunate out there." One of her kids, a teenage girl, has asked for a sweater, sweatshirt and some personal care items.

Dudek says that many of the children ask for basic necessities that other kids take for granted. There are requests for sheets and towels that Evans says, "really

get you right at the heart."

Of course, there are the typical requests for bikes and toys - the fun things that should be under a Christmas tree when you're a child. The Santas of Operation Good Cheer have made this happen too.

Dudek says, "The response here is really amazing. Within two days of the program start, half of the 50 wish lists were gone." She requested more and with two weeks left to go in the program, 62 children are assured of gifts on Christmas through the good cheer of FTD employees.

See Employees, 32



Operation Good Cheer is a program sponsored by Child and Family Services of Michigan Inc. These FTD Florists employees review wish lists and prepare gifts.

friends or funds — even for a small holiday dinner.

However, some special employees at local corporations have done their part to

**A Gift Of FANTASY!!**  
... the fantasy of flight!  
Gift certificates for champagne balloon flights.  
**RENAISSANCE BALLOONS, INC.**  
12625 E. Grand River  
Brighton, Michigan 48116  
(313) 229-7400

**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY BLITZ**

**Get A \$10 Rebate on a Professionally Installed Lift-Master Garage Door Opener\***

**LIFT-MASTER**  
Professionally Installed  
Model 1260 1/2 H.P.  
Heavy-Duty Garage Door Opener

REG. \$275.00  
**NOW ONLY \$254.00**

**Lift-Master**  
The Professional Line

**FARMINGTON GARAGE DOORS**  
29033 Grand River • Farmington Hills  
MI 48336  
**477-2380**

**OFFER ENDS DEC. 24, 1993**

**Receive FREE 2nd Transmitter With Your Purchase**

\* Rugged chain drive with durable steel construction for years of dependable operation. • 4 1/2 minute light delay. • Manual release in case of power failure. • The Protector System® automatically reverses door if any object breaks the safety beam. • Automatic safety reverse. • Premium, multi-function control panel with illuminated push button. • Remote control with unbreakable computer-programmed private security code. • Meets all current federal and state laws and UL 325 safety standards.

**Foldable Extra Seating for Holiday Entertaining or Gift Giving**

Folding chairs of solid oak or maple will make the perfect extra seat for this holiday dinner. When the party's over, fold them away.

White scrubbed oak, cane back, upholstered seat \$99.  
Golden oak, cane back, upholstered seat \$99.  
Cherry finish, traditional back, upholstered seat \$89.  
Lacquered white, ladder back, maple seat \$69.

Folding tables also available to coordinate with all chairs. May be shipped UPS as great gifts. Call in your order or visit us at 828 North Main Street, Downtown Rochester (313) 652-1080

**casual concepts**