

Dear Friends of Gabriel House,

Some of you are asking what the children need for Christmas. As always, cash is our most flexible and most useful donation.

As with years gone by we celebrate Christmas by having our tree and cookie decorating party. This year that will take place on December 13.

Steve Crews makes over 100 cookies then he and Jan and a band of merry visitors transport them and all the cookie decorating stuff to Gabriel House. The frosting and sprinkles fly fast and furious. No one escapes unscathed (or unfrosted!) as evidenced by telltale crumbs and sticky stuff around little mouths and between little fingers.

Then we have an impromptu cookie contest where we decide who has decorated the best cookie. Little Teddy has never won this contest because our only rule is... You must not have bitten your cookie before you enter it.

Our Christmas tree rivals the beauty of any. Every visible branch and needle bares an ornament made by the cooperative effort of the visitors and the children or gathered from years gone by. There is no giving up 'til the last tattered fragment of tinsel is hung. Then we stand back and admire our handy work. We then have my favorite part...The reading of the Christmas story.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”

We never tire of hearing those words.

Typically, Christmas morning, the kids can hardly concentrate on eating breakfast. They are waiting with giddy anticipation to open the presents under the tree. We bury ourselves in wrapping paper and discarded boxes, and ooow and awww over each others presents.

I get teary when I see the lovely gifts that people have sent for our kids. If we are blessed with the donation of a turkey, we have the traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings.

One of our greatest winter needs is warm footie PJs for the little ones and sweats with sox to be used as PJs for the bigger kids. We do not have central heat and many of our kids cannot move to generate their own body heat so this is really important.

If you wish to send a tax deductible financial gift, please put “Gabriel House”, on the memo line of the check. That address is:

Gabriel House
7850 Lester Ave
Lemon Grove, Ca. 91945

Most of the toys that typically developing kids play with are not appropriate or safe for our kids. We ask that stuffed toys not be donated because there is no way to keep them exclusive to one child and they cannot be cleaned thus becoming a huge health hazard. With the exception of a few

closely monitored therapy toys we also cannot accept toys that require batteries. You can imagine how quickly a battery driven toy needs new batteries and that is an expense we would rather not have.

Some of the gifts we do appreciate are:

1. Large piece wooden puzzles
2. Wooden building blocks with a rubber made container.
3. Large Lego's
4. Rubber baby dolls without vinyl hair. (Some kids eat the hair).
5. Digital watches for the older boys and girls who know how to tell time. Do not get expensive ones. The 99 cent ones are fine.
6. Hair ties and barrettes.
7. Match box racers
8. Jenga
9. Uno
10. Pigs
11. Theme toy sets like the Fisher Price Farm or Noah's Ark to be shared.
12. Bean bag chairs. Wonderful alternative seating for wheelchair bound kids.

We have a "no candy" rule. Our treats are fresh fruit, flavored protein drinks, (Pediasure) and flavored yogurt. If you would like to contribute to our supply we would be soooo grateful.

Again any packages can be sent to the afore mentioned address.