

FaithBIT



A Meaningful Way to Spend Christmas Day

Reflection by Terrie Falkenstein

This past Christmas Day Rock Bottom Brewery (whose General Manager is Immanuel's Lou Hernandez) opened its doors to well over 1,000 homeless and lower-income Twin Citians who received meals and presents at the event put on by Miracle, a project of the Craftworks Foundation, the charitable arm of the parent company of Rock Bottom Brewery and Old Chicago restaurants. Families sat at tables with tablecloths, where volunteers served them a holiday meal on china. There was an opportunity for a family photo and a chance to visit with Santa. As they waited, another volunteer interviewed the children about their interests and hobbies. These answers were run down to the basement by volunteer elves who would then assemble a tailor-made gift bag for each child from piles of toys, including soccer balls, games, dolls, books, stuffed animals and even some bikes.

“...I was a very small part
of brightening the holiday
for someone...”
- Terrie Falkenstein

This is where we came in. Lori Wannebo and I wanted to do some kind of service project on Christmas Day and Bill and Pat Middeke had served here in the past, so we decided to join them. While Pat was working in the coat check, Bill, Lori and I were assigned to be “elves.” What fun we had digging through huge boxes and boxes of toys provided by Toys for Tots to fill bags for the children waiting upstairs. And while we didn't get to see the children's reaction to getting the toys, just the idea that they would be surprised and happy was heart-warming. Since Pat was upstairs, she did see them with their new toys and the excitement that ensued.

While there are many ways to spend Christmas, knowing that I was a very small part of brightening the holiday for someone else brought me happiness beyond measure.