

# St. Petersburg Times

## **The joy of a gift for giving** *[EAST, SOUTH Edition]*

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### **Document Text**

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Herein find the goodness of young hearts: Bailey Craven, 11, probably could blanket the city if he wanted.

The energetic fifth-grader at Bay Vista Fundamental School spent two weeks collecting blankets for his gifted program's community service project and is donating them to ASAP, an agency that helps homeless people.

After using fliers to advertise his holiday campaign and going door to door in his Pink Streets neighborhood, Bailey said his "rough count" showed residents donated more than 300 covers.

Dan Strawmyer, his great-uncle who helped with the blanket drive, said the number is more like 500.

Bailey started Dec. 6 after school to cover about 300 houses in the neighborhood.

He found most residents eager to help. Some gave more than one blanket and others pitched in socks, T-shirts and sweat shirts.

Bailey said he conducted a similar project two years ago, collecting about 150 blankets. This year, his goal was to get a few more than he had previously.

"I hit the jackpot three times more," he said.

Bailey, Strawmyer and Bailey's mother, Jennifer Craven, stopped Monday at City Council member Jamie Bennett's house to chat and pick up Bennett's blanket donation. Brent Craven, Bailey's father, died March 30.

"Brent would have been proud," Jennifer Craven said.

Bennett said he plans to name Bailey the student of the month from his council district.

Kicked the can record

David Wysong Jr. and his sister Lilly Wysong stunned the school with their can collection.

Each year, Rio Vista Elementary collects canned food for needy families.

David, 11, a fifth-grader, and Lilly, 9, a fourth-grader, did what principal Wayne Whitney called "an incredible job of soliciting."

The brought in 311 cans, David said, including a lot of green beans.

David knocked on the doors of perhaps 125 houses. On her scooter, Lilly usually wasn't far behind. David Wysong Sr. often came along.

The project's best moment?

"When we turned them in," said David Jr.

"They were, like, yelling loud," he said of his impressed classmates.

Whitney said Rio Vista has enjoyed bountiful holiday spirit this year. A teddy bear drive conducted by Jim's Harley-Davidson resulted in 100 stuffed bears and a 5-foot stuffed frog, plus games and toys.

The drive also resulted in a check so the school could donate gift certificates, and the Rio Vista PTA kicked in more certificates for shoes.

No gifts for him, please

Robert KilPatrick hasn't experienced many Christmases - or birthdays, for that matter - but he knows the joy of giving.

The 7-year-old had a birthday party at the St. Petersburg YMCA last weekend, telling his friends he wanted them to bring something for other people.

Guests brought more than one item, and soon the YMCA had a refrigerator-sized box full of dolls, GI Joes, Tonka trucks and board games.

The YMCA will give them to needy families at this Saturday's Neighbor-to-Neighbor gift event.

Robert's gesture was a blessing, said YMCA spokeswoman Crispin Williams, noting the YMCA is low on toys for this year's giveaway.

"It was so touching," Williams said. "It has been the talk of the Y."

**[Illustration]**

Photo: PHOTO, CHERIE DIEZ

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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