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## Girl Scouts Wrap Gifts for Bay Area Rescue Mission

Submitted by Sherry Diestler



Members of Girl Scout Troop 31983 at the Willow Spring wrapping party. Photo provided

last year that VandenBerghe's troop participated in the toy drive. Not wanting this special tradition to die out, they invited a fifth-grade Lafayette troop to join them this year, explained VandenBerghe.

"At the wrapping party at Willow Spring Church, each of us seniors took a younger girl under our wing as we showed them the ropes of sorting, wrapping, and labeling each present," VandenBerghe said. "Seeing the enthusiasm that these young girls had in helping out gave me faith that this Christmas tradition would continue long after my troop is gone."

For the past seven years Girl Scout Troop 31983 has participated in the Bay Area Rescue Mission's annual Christmas toy drive. This event quickly became a holiday tradition for the girls, complete with hot cocoa and lots and lots of gift-wrapping. This year, nearly 800 gifts were collected and wrapped Dec. 15 at the Willow Spring Church in Moraga, where the troop join forces with other members of the community to wrap the toys and assign each one to a specific gender and age group. The toys were handed out to children on Christmas Day.

Each year, the troop has become more involved and invested in the event. "We have used the money we earn through cookie sales to go shopping at Toys R Us or Big Lots to purchase gifts to contribute to the drive," said troop leader Melanie VandenBerghe. "We have also worked to set out toy barrels around town, in parents' offices, sports clubs, or schools, and we've received massive contributions from the community this way. Our toy drive has been a way to bring not only our troop, but also our entire community together during the holidays to provide less fortunate kids with a special and memorable Christmas."

As graduating high school seniors, this year was the

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