

Toasty Toddler serves 713 children

The Toasty Toddler program, a winter outerwear collection and distribution for children birth through age five served 713 children this season.

Toasty Toddler began as a collaborative project started by the Blair County Human Service Office, now the Blair County Department of Social Services, to help children keep warm through the winter months. Referrals are made by education, health care and social service agencies serving families with young children as well as individuals who call the center looking for help.

The Family Resource Center of Blair County under the United Way of the Southern Alleghenies now facilitates the program.

Collection began in September with donations being collected throughout the winter season with distribution lasting into December. Individual needs continue to be filled as additional referrals and donations arrive. Children also received a book provided by the Family Resource Center to recognize their evidence-based home visiting program, Parents as Teachers.

Each year, the program relies on the generosity of the Blair County community, including 31 businesses, agencies, clubs, churches, early education programs, libraries, civic groups and many individuals who provided supplies, monetary donations and collection sites.

Unique opportunities to assist the program occurred this year including Ashley HomeStore providing a store discount as a coat was donated and Macy's providing an opportunity to receive a \$1,000 grant which was used to shop for outerwear at their store. Volunteers sorted, packed and distributed coats, hats and gloves. This year, 31 volunteers donated



Courtesy photo

Toasty Toddler served 713 children this year with the help of volunteers.

84.5 hours to help the program run smoothly.

This year's participants included: Adam Holliday Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Altoona Area Public Library, Altoona Family Physicians, Altoona Sunrise Rotary, Ashley HomeStore, Bellwood Antis Public Library, Bishop Guilfoyle 6-8 Grade Class Representatives, Blair County Department of Social Services, Blair Regional Nurse Practitioner Group,

Buccinese Ladies Auxilliary, Central Blair Recreation Commission, Contact Altoona, Catholic Daughters of America No. 1755, Del-Grosso Family of Companies Employees, Faith Fellowship/Faith United Church of Christ, Hollidaysburg Area Public Library, Hollidaysburg YMCA, Kohl's Altoona, Lion's Club, Macy's, PA Department of Transportation District 9-0, Penn Highlands Blair County, Penn-Mont Academy, Pyramid Healthcare, St. John Evan-

gelist Church Lakemont, St Therese Church Companion Group, UPMC Altoona, UPMC Professional Practice Committee, Veeder Root, Verizon Retirees, Wehnwood United Methodist Church Quilting Group and numerous individuals.

The Family Resource Center and the United Way of the Southern Alleghenies would like to thank all those, named and unnamed, who contributed to this year's program.