

Kids can be Santa, too

Teach your children the joys of giving

By Erin Harrel

Every year, Santa fills our homes with toys and goodies — way more than most of us need.

As our children compile their wish lists, it's a great time for us as parents to help them learn the joy of *being* a Santa.

I'm not suggesting that Santa pass by your house; I'm suggesting you make it part of your holidays to give your children the experience of helping those who are less fortunate.

Spending a few hours cleaning out toy boxes can be a daunting task. It can turn into a true labor of love, however, if you keep in mind families in need, both locally and around the country.

Remind your children of all the families that lost their homes and belongings in Hurricane Katrina. Talk with them about how expensive it would be to replace all their toys and clothes. Then explain that if they donate their good working toys, families in need will be able to use their limited funds for other essentials.



The Cedarburg children, Matthew, Axel and Anna Rae, prepare their Christmas donations.

Photo by Erin Harrel

Start by calling your church, the American Red Cross or some other relief group to find out about specific needs. Then explain to your children that sharing their gently used toys and clothes will allow other children to enjoy the holidays as much as your family does.

Once they've gone through their toys and decided what to donate, take your children

along when you make the delivery.

You might also seek out a toy drive for new toys that will be distributed to deserving children. Fire departments, churches, schools and malls often have drop-off points; perhaps your workplace conducts its own toy drive.

When you decide to give a new toy, let your child shop for it and go with you to drop it off.

With proper guidance, children can find a sense of pride in the act of giving. That's a wonderful gift that you as a parent can bestow.

If you haven't given in the past, let this year be the start of a wonderful new family tradition. **pc**

— Erin Harrel is in the process of finishing her doctoral work at Barry University. She and her husband reside in Cape Coral with their three children.

PINE RIDGE FARM

The best riding experience
Currently Accepting
Riders & Horses for the
Fall Lesson Program & Horse Show Schedule

German Imports & Domestic

- Riding Instruction And Horse Education
- Beginner, Intermediate And Advanced Levels
- Lessons • Training • Sales
- Horse Showing

Contact **596-9070**
235 Center St., Naples

Tai Chi for Kids Class
Learn to move with the animals...
Simple Tai Chi moves for 3-8 year olds

- Birthday Parties
- Parent-Child Group Activity

Call Betty at **239.561.2157**

TaiChi@comcast.net • TaiChiForBetterHealth.com