

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside holds annual holiday extravaganza



Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside members Ricky Flores, 12, of Redlands, left, and Kalayn Black Ellis, 11, of Redlands react to a game during the organization's annual Holiday Extravaganza held Friday, Dec. 18, 2015 at the Burrage Mansion. KRISTINA HERNANDEZ — STAFF

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Cadillac Briggs, 10, of Mentone looks through a pile of gifts during the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside's annual Holiday extravaganza at the Burrage Mansion Friday, Dec. 18, 2015. KRISTINA HERNANDEZ — STAFF

REDLANDS - Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside celebrated the holidays Dec. 18 at the Burrage Mansion.

The organization held its annual seasonal extravaganza, inviting 700 members from 36 clubhouses to take part in arts and crafts, games, food and visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the historic home.

“This event is great for the kids... and you can't beat those smiling faces,” said P.T. McEwen, BGC's chief executive director.

The holiday extravaganza has been held at the Burrage Mansion since 2008 with the support of the Rochford Foundation and local businesses. T-Mobile, Starbucks and the National Charity League were among this year's sponsors, McEwen said.

Each child in attendance received a toy to take home as a gift. The toys came from the Redlands Fire Department's local Sparks of Love Toy Drive.

Sought-after selections were Barbies, sports memorabilia and bikes and scooters.

Josiah Garcia, 10 of Mentone, selected a basketball from the lot of toys to give to his dad who enjoys playing the sport, while Cadillac Bridges, also 10, picked out a stuffed tiger.

It was her first year participating in the event.

“I like all the staff’s kindness and how they care,” said the Mentone resident. “And I’m looking forward to the treats and I like art.”

Reggie Brown, a captain with the Redlands Fire Department, said the event was just one of several planned during the holiday season to support those in need.

On Christmas Eve, the department delivered gifts to children at random as a way to spread holiday cheer and continue to develop its relationship with the community.

“We are just wanting to go out for a good cause and give back to the community one way or another,” he said.

The Dec. 18 party also served as an opportunity for BGC volunteers and staff to celebrate together. The organization has sites in Alta Loma, Corona, Loma Linda, Mentone, Moreno Valley, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Rialto, Riverside, San Bernardino and Victorville.

To learn more, go to www.begreatie.org.