

Rochford Foundation hosts 10th Holiday Extravaganza benefiting Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside

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Jayloni Griffith loves basketball.

So when he saw a mini basketball court sitting inside the Burrage Mansion on Friday, Dec. 15, his immediate reaction was, “Yeah, finally!”

“I’ve always wanted a basketball set because I like basketball and I play for a team at school,” the 10-year-old San Bernardino boy said.

Jayloni and about 800 of his friends from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside each selected a toy to take home in time for the holidays during the 10th annual Holiday Extravaganza at the Burrage Mansion on Crescent Avenue.



Bus loads of kids from the Boys & Girls Club of Redlands-Riverside arrive at the Burrage Mansion in Redlands on Friday, Dec. 15, 2017. The Redlands Fire Department and the Rochford Foundation partnered to give children in need

a boost for the holidays. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Redlands-Riverside hosted its Holiday Extravaganza at the historic home, and each child received a gift to take home. (Stan Lim, Redlands Daily Facts/SCNG)

The event is sponsored through a partnership between the Rochford Foundation, a group dedicated to serving local youth, and the local Boys & Girls Clubs organization.

Club members from sites in Redlands, Riverside and San Bernardino, like Waterman Gardens where Jayloni attends, are always invited to attend the event. But they have to earn it, and do so by being a good club steward, said Kate Salvesen, Boys & Girls Club vice president of development and marketing.

“This is the best day of the year for the Boys & Girls Club,” Salvesen said. “The kids look forward to it every year.”

Groups and businesses like T-Mobile, Assisteens of Redlands, Burgeson’s Heating & Air Conditioning and Redlands Fire Department all help make the event possible by donating toys or volunteering their time to the cause.

For example, staff from Redlands fire are on hand every year to aid children in selecting a toy to take home. The department also donates to the effort using gifts that are dropped at local stations during the annual Spark of Love Toy Drive, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

“With the magnanimous support of the community of Redlands we will be able to make Christmas special for over 600 children and more than 100 teens at this year’s Holiday Extravaganza,” said Dustin Whitaker, a Redlands fire engineer and social media liaison for the department. “Each and every person that visited one of our events and donated a toy is a real hero in our eyes.”

Friday’s event included arts and craft activities, a catered dinner, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

But for the children, the real excitement will come when they’re home with their new gifts.

“Even though my cousin is here and he’s going to get to pick a toy, too, I am going to share it with my family because it’s not just for me,” Jayloni said.