

 COVER STORY

# My Joyful Heart supports children in need

Junior Board members 'Fill a Truck' for less fortunate children

AMANDA JARZYNSKI, Editor

At the beginning of this year, Diane Carroll, the founder of My Joyful Heart, decided to bring together a group of children to raise awareness for children in need in the community.

The Mokena-based charity organization has been active for 14 years, and Carroll said she wanted to create a program to get the younger members of the community involved in donating for a cause.

"Young people need to get involved, and they need to know that there's a lot of kids out there that are in need of daily necessities to get them through the day," she said. "I think kids helping young people through charity is a great way to do that."

Thus, the Junior Board of Directors for My Joyful Heart was created. This six-member group of young adults in grades 7 and up already has completed a food drive, but for the past several days, they have been hard at work collecting items for their first donation drive, Fill a Truck for



**Payton Mayzis, of the Junior Board, adds bags of items to the donation boxes Friday, June 17, for the Fill a Truck donation drive to support the children of My Joyful Heart.**

PHOTOS BY AMANDA JARZYNSKI/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

Local Kids in Need. The drive got its name because the goal of the junior board was to fill a box truck with as many items as possible.

Collections were completed June 20, and the junior board found themselves overflowing with donations from neighborhoods all around the area.

"I think in the springtime people are going through their clothes; overall we've received a good amount of stuff," said Grace Pawelczyk, president of the junior board. "It's really cool to see how people are willing to part with clothes or toys."

Pawelczyk said she has

been volunteering with My Joyful Heart since she was 12 years old. She was excited to join the board in January, and she looked forward to this particular drive, because it let the group cast a wider net and collect more items.

"Other drives have been more specific," Pawelczyk said. "Collecting shoes, books and toys, but this one is different because we're collecting things like kitchenware, shoes, toys, puzzles, and also it will raise money for My Joyful Heart. So they get donations and money."

On June 10, the junior board started their donation drive by visiting several

neighborhoods in the area and passing out flyers door-to-door to make the community aware of the cause. Then they would pick up donations left on residents' curbsides, or donors could make the trip to My Joyful Heart and drop off their donations personally.

"They've gotten me super enthused about it," Carroll said. "They just loved the whole idea. They thought it would be fun to go out to garage sales and ask for donations. Seeing young people doing this and knowing the need for donations, I just love it."

Now that the collection is



**Payton Mayzis (left) and Grace Pawelczyk unload a bookcase that was donated to My Joyful Heart.**

over, the junior board and volunteers are to sort through the items and decide which they will keep for My Joyful Heart and which will be delivered to Savers for price per pound donations, according to Pawelczyk and Carroll.

"We are sorting things as they come in," Carroll explained. "There's a lot of donations that come in that are brand new. We restock our inventory for our summer give-aways. Everything we can't use will go on the truck. I think it's a win-win for everybody."

The donations are to be packed onto the truck July 7, and the junior board will see if they reached their goal.

Pawelczyk said it is rewarding to collect donations and raise awareness to help the children of the communi-

ty who are in need. She said she hopes the "Fill a Truck" donation drive will be repeated in the future.

For now, the junior board is moving on to their next task of making T-shirts with the My Joyful Heart logo on it, but they are excited for more opportunities to help the needy.

"I'm thrilled with our junior board," Carroll said. "They're doing a fabulous job for the kids in My Joyful Heart."

Members of the junior board are Pawelczyk, Lauren Kopec, Payton Mayzis, Maura Fenessey, and Delaney and Regan LoConte.

For more information about the organization or to become involved, visit [www.myjoyfulheart.org](http://www.myjoyfulheart.org).



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