

December 02, 2022



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25,000 toys worth \$439,000 donated to Illinois Valley children in need

Flat River Group donates surplus toys to United Way for police and other organizations

By Olivia Doak

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Kevin Dale of Laborers Local 393 helps push a pallet load of bicycles onto a semi truck in the loading dock area at Double D Warehouse in Peru on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022. (Scott Anderson)

December 01, 2022 at 4:17 pm CST

A shipment of 25,000 toys and 625 bicycles worth roughly \$439,000 was distributed on Thursday to organizations around the Illinois Valley for kids in need this Christmas.

The toys were donated by Flat River Group, a commerce service based in Michigan, to United Way. United Way Executive Director Julie Sloan said this is the biggest donation they've received. The toys arrived at the Double D Warehouse in Peru and were distributed to organizations in the area to provide Christmas presents for children.

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Pallets containing hundreds of bicycles wait to be loaded by Illinois Valley Building Trades and Laborers Local 393 at Double D Warehouse in Peru on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022. More than 600 bicycles and 25,000 toys were donated from Flat River Group in Michigan and were distributed to local police departments and other toy organizations throughout the Illinois Valley. (Scott Anderson)

Sloan said each organization, depending on its size, will get between 50 and 75 bikes and eight to 10 pallets of toys.

“When you see the scale of what’s being given away, to have an influx of approximately \$439,000 worth of toys go out right at Christmas time, is just massive,” Sloan said. “There are going to be a lot of children this year that I’m sure will be very happy on Christmas morning.”

Kerianne Nesti is an operations manager for Flat River Group and helped load the shipments on the organizations’ trucks on Thursday. She said the company buys toys through vendors and sells them to different companies. The toys donated were mainly acquired during the height of the pandemic, and the company found itself with more toys than needed.

“We always like giving back to the community, the company does, and we had a surplus of toys so it all worked out perfectly,” Nesti said. “We always try to give back to the local areas.”

Each organization brought a semi truck or trailer to pick up the toys from the warehouse on Thursday. Flat River Group has a fulfillment center located at the Double D warehouse in Peru where the toys were housed and sorted upon arrival.

The following police departments received donated toys and bikes: Mendota, La Salle, Peru, Spring Valley, Oglesby, La Salle County, Ladd, Tonica and Granville. The Illinois Valley Building and Construction Trades and Cops for Cancer also were donation recipients.

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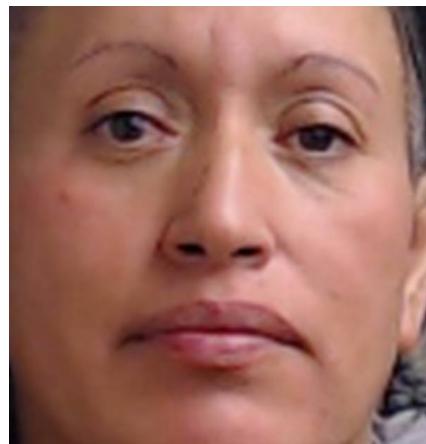
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Olivia Doak

Olivia covers Peru and La Salle for the NewsTribune



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