



Just Pick One.

Give the Gift of OPPORTUNITY. You'll end up smiling too.



Nancy Stewart Picked Two!!

"It was a different Christmas experience for my two young nephews last year. These well-gifted boys got one less present from their doting aunt (me) and the money I would have spent on their gifts was passed on to a child in need through the Moorelands Gift of Opportunity.

"I was proud of my 7 and 9 year-old nephews who, when I told them what I was planning to do, took a very short time to agree that it was a very good idea. (Of course, like most children, they

also wanted to be sure they were still getting at least *one* gift from me!)

"For many years our family has despaired at the excess of the holiday season. The Moorelands Gift of Opportunity seemed a logical and well-deserving way of putting a 'gift' into another needier child's hands.

"As a guidance counsellor at Valley Park Middle School, which serves both the Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park communities, I am frequently made aware of the needs of these children - and their families.

"As a member of the Moorelands

board, I know that the Moorelands After-school and Leadership programs in these neighbourhoods are full, with long waiting lists, enough to fill additional programs - *if only there were the funds to do so.*

"This holiday season I urge you to think about buying one less gift for that special someone (or two or three!) and giving the money you would have spent to the Gift of Opportunity. By donating online, there are no crowds, no tired feet and get that great feeling of knowing that you have 'done good.'"

There's joy in giving....

... for auntie Jean

"My sister Caroline and I work for a busy airline in a busy airport where real human contact is, at best, fleeting, and where the holiday season tends to bring out more jangle than jingle.

"Then there's Moorelands and their Adopt-a-Family program. For the past several years I've been spending an evening (usually a week or two before Christmas) helping with distribution. A couple of years ago my sister and her two boys, now 12 and 15, began volunteering with me. Without going all Norman Rockwell, it's pretty wonderful to be a part of something so meaningful.

"My nephew Philippe (15) loves telling the story of a

grandmother who was picking up the Christmas gifts for her grandchildren. She was so moved when she saw Philippe coming towards her carrying a pile of boxes that she ran full-tilt into him, intending to give him a big hug but almost knocking him (and the gifts) over. 'We both started laughing hysterically,' he said. 'At some point, I couldn't tell if she was laughing or crying. She told me I reminded her of her grandson. It really made me think, why was I lucky and someone else not?' We're all looking forward to another great night with my family helping our Moorelands family helping an even bigger family than that." - **Jean Haddad**

... and for nephew Jacques as well.

"My name is Jacques Lavoie and I am 12 years old. Every year at Christmas I look forward to getting great gifts. A couple of years ago, I found out that it's not always the case for some



Jean Haddad, Philippe Lavoie, Jacques Lavoie & Caroline Lavoie

families in downtown Toronto. On December 20, 2008, my brother, my mother, my aunt and I volunteered for a night at Moorelands' head office.

"I arrived wearing sweatpants and a hoodie. The Moorelands workers provided me with a mint-green elf hat and called me 'Santa's Little Helper'. It was my job to give families the right boxes and carry them to their car.

"Some of the boxes felt like they were packed with lead. Every hour or so, Moorelands would give us a break with hot chocolate and cookies.

"Shortly after one break, there was one really nice couple picking up gifts for their kids. While we were on the elevator, me carrying two big boxes, they insisted on giving me a toonie because of my load and the cold weather. I politely declined. They stood there for a minute and smiled. Then they thanked me and slowly walked to their car.

"When I got upstairs, I told other volunteers what had happened and asked what I should have said. They told me I'd done the right thing and that they were proud of me.

Sitting in the back seat of the car on the drive home, I watched the snowflakes dance in the night sky. Suddenly, it felt like Christmas." - **Jacques Lavoie**

There's also joy in receiving.

“My son and I would like to thank you for your generosity, time and effort and overall kindness! We were overwhelmed by the planning that went into my son's gifts. He was actually shopped for! The gifts were so thoughtfully chosen! I wish you could have seen the smile on his face! THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!

- **Dylan's Mom**”

SCHOOLS help Moorelands share the Christmas spirit...



If you walk the halls of the Toronto French School at this time of year, you'll find profiles of families the students are "adopting" for Christmas. These children of privilege are connecting with those in their city who are less fortunate. TFS students learn the ages and interests of children on their walls before heading out to shop for the perfect presents - for someone else. Then they organize, wrap and pack their contributions and bring their hampers to Moorelands' 'Christmas Warehouse,' right here at head office.

Havergal's Junior School is doing the same this year for 15 families. "We were impressed with the integrity of Moorelands' programming and with its connection to the neighbourhoods of our partner schools," says Ann Peel, the school's Director. "Partnering with Moorelands enables our students to learn more about the communities in which we're already active. It deepens those relationships and allows mutual learning to happen. We're thrilled to be able to contribute." - **D.S.**

..and so do CHURCHES like St. Timothy's...



All year long the congregation at St. Timothy's in north Toronto is part of Moorelands' extended family, knitting Baby Bundles for needy newborns, helping to Send-a-Kid to camp, coming up to the Wilderness Camp every autumn to complete much-needed building projects and supporting our After-school Programs in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park. But when the bells of Christmas toll, their congregation of about 350 households makes a special effort to share holiday cheer. This year they'll "adopt" four families, buying presents to fill Holiday Hampers at a cost of \$285 each. According to Linda Gilpin, chair of their Outreach Committee, "We have young families who take their children along when they shop for others." She sees everything St. Timothy's does with Moorelands as a manifestation of the Church's vision: "Open Arms, Open Hearts, Open Minds." - **G.S.**

...as well as CORPORATIONS such as XL Group



Fifty staffers in the Canadian offices of XL Insurance and XL Reinsurance start their Christmas season by checking lists for their adopted families from Moorelands.

Faster than you can say Kris Kringle, hampers are full of just the right goodies. "It's a great team effort, one I strongly recommend to anyone who feels

Christmas has lost some of its spirit," says Cindy Guyatt, one of the organizers. She introduced the program to her employer five years ago. "Shopping is my passion and knowing my small contribution is putting smiles on children's faces is the highlight of my season." This Moorelands' program is only one of many ways XL Group improves lives in communities where they do business. - **D.S.**

Now, here are some things you can do.

Make a financial contribution

Donate to Moorelands Christmas Sharing Program and we'll do the shopping.

- \$125 will make the holidays happy for a family of two
- \$200 will do the same for a family of three
- \$285 will bring smiles to a family of four
- \$400 will spread joy to the largest family on our list

OR

Give the Gift of OPPORTUNITY, see back page.

Adopt-a-Family

Consider "adopting" a family in need this Christmas. We'll

provide you with a family's profile, including the children's first names, ages and interests. With their needs and our gift suggestions in mind, enjoy shopping for your Christmas family! More information and an application form are available on our website at www.moorelands.ca.

Volunteer

We're looking for friendly elves to help with distributing Christmas packages at our office on Merton Street on December 15th and 16th. If you have a few hours to spare sometime between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. please call our Christmas Sharing Coordinator, Michael Kim at 416-466-9987 ext. 302. Smiles and cookies guaranteed. - **P.J.**

"OPPORTUNITY" - this season's finest gift



Want to follow "Aunt Nancy's" example and make this holiday more meaningful for you and for the already fortunate children on your gift list? All it takes is for kids to agree that they'd barely notice if the money you'd spend on one of their gifts went instead to a child in need.

We call it the "Gift of Opportunity" - the chance for your family to share their good fortune with a child or youth on our Moorelands' list. That child would then have the opportunity to attend one of our programs. That's a gift that lasts all year. Maybe even a lifetime.

Instead of a present, your generous family member will receive a card from you and the knowledge that their small sacrifice provided a disadvantaged child with the opportunity to succeed.

For more details, check out the Moorelands' Gift of Opportunity Campaign at www.moorelands.ca.

Why not get your clan, your office or service club to step up to the challenge? We offer secure online donations,

immediate receipting and a firm commitment that this gift won't be wasted. In fact, it's a gift that'll make a real difference in the life of a disadvantaged Toronto child and pass on important lessons to everyone involved.

If you prefer a hard copy of a printed Gift of Opportunity card, please email Dagmar at dschroeder@moorelands.ca or call 416-466-9987 x303.

-D.S.

"That's me, and my dog, Bella!"



and kindergarten teacher at Thorncliffe Park Elementary School, ran the full marathon, three other team members completed half marathons while the rest of us finished the 5k charity challenge. We all had a great time.

"In addition to the undeniable attention drawn to the organization, we raised over \$15,000 -- not bad for a first-time effort. Wait until next year!"

-B.T.

"Moorelands added a colourful splash to the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on September 26. The 32 board members, staff, family and friends who ran, walked and wheeled for Moorelands were impossible to miss, resplendent in fluorescent fuchsias, greens and blues to drive home the message: 'Helping Kids Shape Brighter Futures.'

"John Offutt, board member

There will be no February AGM.

It's been moved to April. For details see our "February Valentine's ECHO."

Our Mandate

At Moorelands, we recognize the inherent value of all children and youth. We work with Toronto children and youth affected by poverty, to provide them with positive and fun experiences to help strengthen their confidence, competence and character.

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