



**HOLIDAY SHOPPING IN  
NAPLES**  
MILLER CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
**Volunteers Brighten Holidays For Youth With Cancer**

**By Kelly Garrison**  
**Features Editor**

Youth at Miller Children's Hospital who are fighting cancer while their families struggle with poverty will have a collection of presents to unwrap this holiday season, thanks to a program organized by the Long Beach Cancer League.

For years, "Adopt A Family" volunteers have collected donations to make the holidays brighter for low-income families whose children are fighting for their lives at the hospital. This season, the organization got help from dozens of high school students and other volunteers who helped hand wrap gifts and prepare them for delivery.

"These families are extremely low-income and are very much in need," said Karen Braverman-Freeman, a member of the Cancer League. "They don't have the extended family to help them, or they may have many family members within one household. They wouldn't be able to have Christmas toys without our help."

Volunteers who helped with the latest gift-wrapping gathering on Saturday were helping to complete a batch of gifts for the 40 low-income families at the hospital that will receive gifts this year. The program is collaboration between the Cancer League and the Jonathan Jacques Children's Cancer Center (JJC-CC) outreach program for children with cancer and blood diseases at Miller Children's Hospital.

"I contact the center, and they give me the wish lists" Braverman-Freeman said. "In November, we put family names on boxes and have their wish-lists taped onto them, and the families get anonymous gifts that say, 'From Santa.' It's a group effort."

Some favorites have included activity books, bikes, makeup, iPods, dolls and clothes. Household items, such as linens, kitchenware and towels, also are distributed along with a batch of home baked goods. One of the easiest items to donate, she said, is a gift card to an area store, such as Target, Wal-Mart, Ralphs or Food4Less.

She began helping with the outreach in 2003 after a friend introduced her to the program. Braverman-Freeman also has led beading classes at the league's Camp Summersault, a weeklong day camp for children who are cancer survivors or being treated for cancer.

"I got involved because it was about children" she said. "This is my passion. I feel that I've had a very blessed life, and it's important to give back, and it's a great time to."

The group has gotten support from community members such as Long Beach First Lady, Nancy Foster and community activist Justin Rudd.

Its programs are dependent on donations and member dues, she said.

The Cancer League is a fundraising auxiliary of the American Cancer Society that seeks to further the purpose of the society.

**To donate, mail checks written out to "LBCL" to The Long Beach Cancer League, 936 Pine Ave., Long beach, CA, 90813 — with a memo that the donation should go to "Adopt A Family".**