

## **GENEVA COMMUNITY JOINS NON-PROFIT GROUP FOR MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY TOY COLLECTION**

*Geneva, Il.* On Saturday, October 22, several Geneva community groups and schools will join the non-profit organization A Lasting World Inc. in facilitating the S.A.N.T.A. (Send A New Toy (to) Appalachia) Project.

New toys will be collected from October 18-21 at Friendship Station Preschool, Fabyan Elementary School, St. Peter Elementary School, Geneva High School, the Geneva Police Department, and at Geneva City Hall. The public is invited to participate in the toy drive by dropping off new toys at the Geneva Police Department any time during normal business hours October 18-21, and outside Mayor Kevin Burns' office at Geneva City Hall, 22 S. Second Street, Geneva, on October 22, from 10 a.m.-12 Noon.

The S.A.N.T.A. Project is part of the annual Make A Difference Day event, the nation's largest day of doing good. Each year, millions of Americans volunteer in their communities on Make A Difference Day, sponsored by USA Weekend Magazine, the HandsOn Network, and the Paul Newman Foundation. Mayor Kevin Burns has proclaimed October 22 as official Make A Difference Day in the City of Geneva.

The Geneva volunteer project was the idea of Geneva resident Wen Marcec, Founder of A Lasting World Inc. Wen and her organization have been working with underprivileged children in Appalachia, Kentucky for the past 10 years.

The children who will receive the new toys from Geneva donators all come from homes where the average annual family income is less than \$12,000, well below the national poverty level. The children are all on the federal lunch program at the schools they attend. Besides their financial difficulties, many of the children have domestic and emotional issues, and many of them suffer from depression and feelings of hopelessness. Without the help of the S.A.N.T.A. Project, Ms. Marcec says these Kentucky children will receive no holiday gifts at all.

Last year, the S.A.N.T.A. Project collected over 900 toys and served almost 400 families in Appalachia, Kentucky. Ms. Marcec hopes that this year's toy drive will bring in an even bigger collection.

Anyone interested in donating a new toy to the S.A.N.T.A. Project can drop the item off outside the Mayor's office on Saturday morning, October 22, between 10 a.m. and 12 Noon. If those hours are not convenient, interested persons can drop toys off October 17-21 at the City of Geneva Police Department during regular business hours. You may also contact Ms. Marcec at 630-917-3912 to arrange for a different drop-off time.

Examples of appropriate toys are: dolls, action figures, trucks, trains, cars, blocks, puzzles, books, craft kits, sports items (footballs, basketballs, baseballs, etc.), board games, play kitchen items, teaching toys, etc. Please do not donate toys that need batteries or toys that need electricity. Many of the homes in which the toy recipients reside do not have electrical power. Toys should not be gift-wrapped.

***For more information about the S.A.N.T.A. Project or to make arrangements to drop off a new toy, please contact Wen Marcec at 630-917-3912.***

