

Corvette Club Delivers Toys By the Trunkload

By DYLAN GAMEZ

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THE VILLAGES

Corvettes cruised into the parking lot with trunkloads of treasures.

As the cars filed in, members of the Village Vettes Corvette Club gathered at the backs of the vehicles, eagerly waiting for trunks to pop open.

With each trunk that popped Wednesday at George Nahas Chevrolet in Wildwood, there were a few more Christmas presents for Toys for Tots that had to be accounted for, and added, to one of three transport trucks.

"We support four main charities throughout the year, and every year now, for the fourth quarter, we work on raising money, and collecting toys, for Toys for Tots," said member Roger Stokes. "We start collecting at the car show and we were at a couple of the tree lightings on the squares."

The Villages," Reimer said.

Reimer paused for a few seconds as tears welled in his eyes — his voice shook as he continued.

"When I grew up we didn't have a lot of money," Reimer said. "As I went on and had a career I was fortunate enough that I could build the type of life where I could get a Corvette, and now we need to give back. Christmastime is when children need it the most."

At 11 a.m. all the toys and donations were collected and loaded into three trucks, provided by George Nahas Chevrolet.

The dealership provided coffee and sweet treats for the "elves" to enjoy as they worked to pack the vans.

"It's a ball," said Jon Cohan, sales consultant and liaison for



Roger Reimer, of the Village of Bonita and a member of the Village Vettes Corvette Club, brings a donation of toys Wednesday for the Toys For Tots program to their meeting place at George Nahas Chevrolet in Wildwood.

George Horsford
Daily Sun

Stokes said the fundraiser, which collected \$4,879 and 1,130 toys, is a group effort.

"All of our members get on board," Stokes said. "They will have block parties in their neighborhoods and collect toys."

Roger Reimer, of the Village of Bonita, was undeniably "on board" and in the Christmas spirit — dressed from head to toe

as one of Santa's elves.

Reimer hosted a Christmas party in his neighborhood asking neighbors to BYOB (bring your own booze) and BYOT (bring your own toy).

Reimer also went around to other neighbors with letters to inform them of the group's efforts.

"We're very fortunate in

George Nahas Chevrolet and the Village Vettes. "It's just a fun time and a great cause. We're thrilled to be a part of this."

After the trucks were loaded, and giant stuffed animals were strapped into the passenger seats, the Wildwood Police Department escorted the trucks, and more than 20 Corvettes, in a caravan to the Toys for Tots building in Leesburg.

Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots of Lake and Sumter County volunteers — armed with shopping carts — lined up to unload the trucks as they pulled in.

The 17,000-square-foot building holds more than 60,000 toys to share with more than 15,000 local families.

"We want to thank the Village Vettes Corvette Club for their

generous donation," said Jack Maiz, tri-county coordinator for Toys for Tots. "They are one of our biggest donors."

Three years ago, Maiz started inviting the group to caravan to the facility.

"We wanted to do something for them," Maiz said. "They get to see the whole operation and we make them lunch."

Members of the club wandered the area before enjoying hamburgers, hot dogs, sloppy joes and conversation with volunteers.

"It's exciting to collect the toys," said Tom Swiers, club treasurer. "Our club is socially focused, but we still have a lot of heart."

After lunch, members drove off with their hearts — and bellies — full.