

Whatever they need, coach will help, indeed

David Moore's program sends 'love thy neighbor' message, fulfills wishes

BY ANGELA PATTERSON
pattersona@knews.com

Before David Moore could ever help those in need, he first had to learn how to receive aid himself.

"My house burned down, and I lost everything," said Moore, a Lenoir City High School football coach. "I didn't know how to receive help, but finally I had to. A man gave me a pack of boxer shorts, and he told me he knew I needed them. It was all I could do to reach out my hand, look him in the eye and say 'thank you.' That was a big step for me. But what touched me even more than the offering was the care and friendship that he showed me."

And it was that spirit of outreach

CHRISTMAS CARE/CARE 365

Those interested in volunteering with this organization or making a donation to a family in need this season can call David Moore at 865-966 CARE.

and concern that eventually led Moore to start Christmas Care/Care 365, an organization that pairs families in need with volunteer families who want to lend a helping hand.

While the organization assists families throughout the year, volunteer efforts go into overdrive during the Christmas season.

"We take donations, and the area Wal-Mart stores allow us to have donation boxes," Moore said. "The citizen donations really help us. We ask the parents what they need for Christmas, whether it be toys or food ... whatever they need, and we try to match up the donations with their wishes as best we can."

Jason Hamilton, a member of Christmas Care/Care 365's board of directors, said the organization is filling a need, especially in Loudon County.

"He and this organization give support to needy families," said Hamilton, a CPA with Lattimore, Morgan, Black and Cain, who also is helping Moore obtain nonprofit status. "They're helping families provide for their children when they would not be able otherwise."

Moore said that the core of this effort is based on the notion of "love thy neighbor." When people fall on hard times, others shouldn't ridicule and shun them, but support them physically, spiritually and emotionally.

"We go into these people's homes with gifts, and we spend time with them," Moore said. "It's like it used to be when neighbors took the time because the people meant that much to them. That's what makes this effort different than the rest: the human interaction between the families."

Jennifer Morrison learned firsthand about the caring spirit of oth-



CATHY CLAPKE/NEWS SENTINEL

Volunteers Jennifer Morrison, left, and her daughter, Mikaela, 6, help sort food items for Christmas Care/Care 365, a nonprofit program for the needy begun by David Moore, a Lenoir City teacher. "If people see other people really give from the heart, maybe they'll give too," said Morrison.

CARE

from B1

he helped my family and I get everything we needed for Christmas," Morrison said. "He helped me so much that I told him next year I would volunteer and help another family. So I called him about two weeks ago, and the first thing he asked was if we needed anything. And I told him we were taken care of; we just wanted to make sure other families had what they needed."

Morrison and her father and stepmother, Rick and Tammy Holt, are volunteering with the charitable organization, spending evenings in a donated storage building sorting out donations from the community.

"This program is a sure thing," Morrison said. "It's of God. Coach Moore is a good man, and these donations really do get to the families who need them."

On Dec. 14 alone, Moore received 17 calls from people who

needed assistance this season. If the items requested haven't already been donated, he calls the members of his "care team" to fulfill the wish.

Chassity Manuel and her husband wanted to have a Christmas tree for her 3-year-old daughter, Alyssa, and called Moore for help.

"Chassity called coach Moore about a Christmas tree, and he came right over with it," said the Rev. Patricia Horner, Manuel's mother-in-law. "These kids have really fallen on hard times, but by the grace of God, they're moving on. Coach Moore has been great to help them."

Moore feels that although this is his third Christmas with the program, it's really only the beginning.

"I know what it's like to go through hard situations and feel like people don't care," Moore said. "But there are wonderful people out there who care and want to help. Through this network of people, we can help so many people in so many ways."