

## **A FRIEND SIMPLY ASKING ANOTHER FRIEND**

Hatchimals. EtchaSketch. AirHogs. Oh my!

The Rotary Club of Downey distributed nearly 2,000 of these Spin Master fuzzy delights absolutely free, helping to distribute packages of the toys to other Rotary Clubs and groups that focus on children at Christmas.

“We got these just in time for the holidays,” said Jaimee Sul Baker, a Downey Rotarian and florist by profession.

Jaimee said the entire operation came down to a single question.

“I have a long-time friend, Kimberly Kim, who has been a toy designer for over 20 years,” said Jaimee. “She works for a popular toy design company called Spin Master, and one day when I hosted a girls’ day at our house, I just simply asked her, ‘Hey, does your company ever donate toys?’”

And the rest is history.

“Turns out,” said Jaimee, “Spin Master has been trying to find a non-profit organization to which to donate thousands of toys each year.”

Working with Spin Master’s Community Relations representative, Amy Wolff; and their Donations Coordinator, Henry Montgomery; the company coordinated the donation of more than 1,800 toys in just a couple of days. These aren’t leftover toys, either. They are highly sought after, top-of-the-line items.

But where can you store six pallets, each ten feet high and piled with boxes of toys? “Too much for a garage,” said Jaimee. “So, thanks to the logistical skills and storage space at the Arc, we found a spot.”

“We’re glad we could offer you our warehouse space,” said Ray Brown, Chief Financial Officer at the Arc and another member of the Downey Club.

Rotarians met recently at the Arc headquarters and worked for several hours to sort and re-package the toys for distribution.

“All Rotary clubs in District 5280 were notified that we had the toys available,” said Barbara Lamberth, Treasurer of the Downey Club, who coordinated the re-arranging the toys into variety parcels of 25. “Interested clubs submitted specific plans for giving out the toys, and then it was first come, first served.”

**PICTURE OF BARBARA HOLDING MECCO ROBOT DOLL, IN ARC BUILDING #3**

Rotarians will be distributing this gigantic bagful of toys to other clubs in District 5280: Bellflower, Rio Hondo, Culver City, Latinos Unidos, Santa Monica, Torrance-Del Amo, Playa Venice, Inglewood, Lawndale & Koreatown. Local organizations like Rancho Los Amigos' Pediatric Unit will share in this abundance, as well as Exchange Club Family Support Center; Human Services Association; City of Downey Police & Fire Departments; and Toys for Tecate, an orphanage in Tijuana.

One extra special day will happen at Rancho Los Amigos World Rehabilitation Center. "They are having a New Year's Program on December 27," said Barbara, "for kids who are patients in the Pediatric Unit and their families, on their beautiful Downey campus. They'll have lemonade and hot dogs, cotton candy, balloons and games of chance. These toys will be the top prizes."

"I just simply asked, and that's how it got started," said Jaimee, "a friend simply asking another friend whose company was looking for the right organization to help underserved children. Rotary hopes to have a long-term relationship with Spin Master."

Third-graders from Downey Unified School District who come as guests to the Rotary Club's annual Christmas luncheon will receive from Santa himself the first of these benefits.



Jaimee and Doug Baker

Barbara Lamberth and toy







Toys bagged in sacks of 25, labeled and ready to be picked up

Barbara Lamberth and toy

