

## **TEAM collecting toys for local tots**

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

By Patricia Villers, Register Staff

ANSONIA — Christmas may seem far off, but to the volunteers assisting Training, Education and Manpower Inc.'s staff with its annual Valley Toys for Tots drive, it is just around the corner.

Richard Knoll, president/CEO of TEAM said more Valley families are out of work this year, but he is confident the community will continue to give to the campaign. Knoll said his agency has seen a "40 percent increase over last year in (the number of) families needing heating assistance."

TEAM Director of Development Diane Stroman said last year the drive served 1,453 children in the Valley, Bethany, Orange and Milford, TEAM's service area.

There were 7,260 toys distributed in 2008 and 113 volunteers helped with processing clients' applications, sorting toys, setting up the distribution site, restocking shelves and running the distribution.

Stroman said this year's toy "store" will be at 153 Main St., Ansonia, in a building that is attached to the Doyle Senior Center, 157 Main St.

She thanked Mayor James Della Volpe for the city's assistance in finding a new distribution site. The former East Main Street location that had been used for the last several years was not available, Stroman said.

Della Volpe said he was pleased the city could assist TEAM and provide a new site, and he was looking forward to helping the effort.

Several individuals spoke at a kickoff breakfast last week at John J. Sullivan's restaurant about how they or their organizations were ready to help.

Tom Baklik, owner of Yankee Clipper Barber Shop, said he and his wife, Diane, will hold the 5th annual breakfast at their home, 19 Chucta Road, Seymour, starting at 9 a.m. Nov. 29. The event includes musical entertainment and a visit from Santa. Admission is a donation to Valley Toys for Tots.

In Shelton, Echo Hose Ambulance and Pine Rock Park Fire Company 4 will hold a "Stories with Santa" event from 9 a.m. to noon Dec. 5 at the Shelton Senior Center, 81 Wheeler St. There will be photos taken with Santa as well as refreshments and children's activities. Admission will be an unwrapped toy or book, or a monetary donation to Valley Toys for Tots.

Pink Rock Park firefighter Adam Polaski said the fire company will be collecting toys at Wal-Mart, 465 Bridgeport Ave., Shelton. The firetruck will be in the parking lot all day Nov. 28, Dec. 12 and 13, he said.

Seymour Community Police Officer Sergio Desiderato said the department will collect toys from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 12 at the Seymour Stop & Shop, 15 Franklin St. The store is adjacent to the police station. Radio station KC101 will broadcast live from the parking lot, and Griffin Hospital's Valley Parish Nurses will be on hand to offer free blood pressure screenings.

For information on volunteering, call Trish Wigglesworth at 203-736-5420, ext. 221, or [twigglesworth@teaminc.org](mailto:twigglesworth@teaminc.org).

Patricia Villers can be reached at [pvillers@nhregister.com](mailto:pvillers@nhregister.com).