

Rescue Mission calls community together for Good Friday fun

By Thaddeus Berglund

There was no single reason why Good Friday at the Durham Rescue Mission was a special event; there were thousands – such as the almost 2,000 Easter baskets and 10,000 articles of clothing distributed to those in need.

With help from churches, businesses and individuals in the community, the Durham Rescue Mission, a homeless shelter and addiction recovery program, gave away thousands of items to help Durham families have a great Easter weekend.

In addition to the clothes and baskets, the Rescue Mission served 2,400 hot dogs, 900 pounds of barbecue and handed out over 750 bags of canned goods. All they asked for in return was a smile and good time.

“This is one of the best events I have seen here,” said Ricardo Stevens, who comes to the event with his grandchildren every year. “The barbecue is off the chain.”

For many families like his, the Good Friday event is a way to fit in and have a great time with their own family as well as the Durham community – which is, in its own way, like a second family. The kids played games or had balloon animals made, while the parents found peace in knowing that the Easter weekend would start out with a smile.

Asiaa Eeas, Steven’s granddaughter, has attended the event for the last eight years with him. This year was different because two of her cousins, Kendell and Kenari-



Cousins Shinesty Cates (middle), 10, and Kiyah Wilkerson (right), 9, excitedly comparing what they got in their Easter baskets. Photo by Brooke Helton.

yah English, came along for the first time. But her favorite part of the event didn’t change.

“Getting the balloon animals is my favorite,” Eeas said.

For other families, the event showed the community cares about them and is willing to come together to ensure everyone has a wonderful Easter.

Mickey Royster and his two sons, TyJay and TyLee, have been coming to the Good Friday event for over eight years and always enjoy it. Royster and his sons also attend many other Rescue Mission events, and said they appreciate everything the

mission has done for them.

While the Rescue Mission helped many Durham families this past Good Friday, it wouldn’t have been possible if without volunteers like Bernie Donato.

Donato, who retired from the Air Force 24 years ago, was at the Rescue Mission’s event volunteering with the Team Red, White & Blue organization for the second year in a row.

“Our goal is to enrich the lives of American veterans by connecting them with their community,” Donato said about the organization.

Donato and her group of volunteers helped run the children’s games and made sure the food serving went smoothly. Team Red, White & Blue was a part of the 320 volunteers that made the event possible.

Even the famous Big Idaho Potato Tour was able to stop by. The giant potato-shaped truck parked at the event for people to take pictures, and the organization donated to the Rescue Mission as part of its nationwide tour.

Good Friday at the Durham Rescue Mission aimed to show that Durham residents care for each other and can come together as one. All families were welcome to enjoy the same Good Friday service no matter what language they spoke; they ate the same food, played the same games and all rejoiced together.



Volunteers from the veterans organization Team Red, White & Blue helping run the children’s games at the Rescue Mission. Photo by Brooke Helton.