

## Sand Castle Shelter thanks community

By Jim Musial  
Sand Castle Shelter

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With Christmas behind them as a warm and tender memory, Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families wants to take a moment to acknowledge and thank all of the generous volunteers and donors who made Christmas possible this year for Sand Castle's families.

The families who come to us for help have lost most everything and are either literally starting over or are regrouping after some severe life-changing setbacks. It is most devastating at holiday time when reality hits these parents that there will be no Christmas for their children this year. Enter the citizens and neighbors of Michigan City, our heroes and guardian angels. Because of them, there were tears on Christmas Morning, tears of joy.

As early as August, Sand Castle started receiving telephone calls from people and organizations wanting to help. It began with a primary Christmas sponsor, Madison Street Financial Advisors of the UBS Financial Services Inc. of Chicago. This group is headed by Jim Percifield, who, with his wife Amy, owns the Uptown Theatre for the Performing Arts on Franklin Street in Michigan City.

Through fundraising efforts and personal contributions, this wonderful group of individuals provided multiple gifts for every resident of the shelter, children and parents alike. Because Sand Castle residents only stay 30-45 days on average, it was difficult to pinpoint exactly who would be in the shelter at Christmas. Armed with last minute information, Percifield's personal assistant, Jennifer Bleck-Espinoza, and her husband Bobby, shopped for, wrapped and delivered the presents to Sand Castle just days prior to Christmas.

In addition, in early November, Sand Castle received a call from April and Ron Stib of the Toys for Tots Program. Taking all of the information regarding the children's ages and gender, the program stood ready to send multiple toys for every child in Sand Castle only days before Christmas. Similar to the time issue which faced other donors, Toys for Tots worked within the short window despite the high demand on their program at this time of year.

Also in November, Anita Peters, Principal of Queen of All Saints School, reached out to Sand Castle as well. Working under similar time constraints, the families of Queen of All Saints responded with a truck full of presents for every resident of Sand Castle, enough for each to open several on Christmas morning. Not to be left out, the adults received Walmart gift cards from Valerie and Garry Blumenfeld and Deborah Hyndman of Bulk Transport. James Flanigan contributed cash for stocking stuffers and every woman received a gift card to the Timothy Jeffery Salon on Franklin Street, courtesy of Betsy and Richard Glass.

Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families and Citizens Concerned For the Homeless, Inc. wish to thank and acknowledge everyone who helped make Christmas possible. Every single contribution made year round helps us run our programs. Without the unending support of our community, we wouldn't be in the position to offer our families the help they need to return to self-sufficiency and independence. Thank you for helping our families enjoy Christmas; but, equally as important, thank you for helping us give our families the best gift of all, the gift of hope, every day of the year.

To learn more about Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families, including how to contribute or volunteer, visit our website at [www.Citizens4homeless.org](http://www.Citizens4homeless.org) or visit us on Facebook by searching Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families, Michigan City, Indiana.

*Jim Musial is Executive Director of Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families.*



Homeless Families had a great Christmas morning thanks to generous contributions from the community



Sand Castle Shelter for Homeless Families