



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Fire Rescue

2631 SE Third St.
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: 352-291-8000
Fax: 352-291-8098

Contact: Peveeta Seeraj, Public Education Specialist, Marion County Fire Rescue
Office: 352-291-8064 ▪ Pager: 352-898-3570 ▪ Email: peveeta.seeraj@marioncountyfl.org

REMINDER: BE A HOLIDAY HELPER AND BRIGHTEN THE HOLIDAYS FOR A LOCAL CHILD

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (Dec. 12, 2011) – Many can look back warmly on holidays spent as children: brightly lit Christmas trees, joyous family and friends and bountiful presents. The biggest worry was which present to open first.

Unfortunately, the reality for a substantial number of Marion County children right in our back yard is different. Some are at risk of not having a holiday at all. For the last 10 plus years, Marion County Fire Rescue's Holiday Helpers program has set out to change that.

Last year's effort began when Marion County Fire Rescue partnered with Marion County Public Schools and met the holiday needs of 144 kids by mid-December, when school let out. Following that, Marion County Fire Rescue received an additional 416 requests for toys, food and clothing in one day. Of these children, 256 wouldn't have received anything if it were not for MCFR's firefighters and fire fleet employees who donated approximately \$1,300 to meet the needs of the additional families.

This year's outlook is expected to be just as grim, if not worse. However, there's still time to make a difference.

The deadline for donations to the school partnership is this Friday, Dec. 16, but Marion County Fire Rescue will continue to collect toys and jackets for children of all ages (newborn to teen), as well as non-perishable food, up until Christmas to fulfill additional requests from the community.

New and unwrapped items can be dropped off at Marion County Fire Rescue Headquarters (2631 SE Third St.), Marion County Fire Rescue Operations (3230 SE Maricamp Road) or at any of the county's 24 career fire stations.

###

"Meeting Needs by Exceeding Expectations"