



# Stephen's Mission

## The Toledo Kids Who Care

### Merry Christmas!!



As the Christmas Season is upon us, we find ourselves reflecting on the past year (and what a year it has been!!) and on those who have helped to shape our lives in a most significant way.

We value all of you and look forward to the year to come. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with peace and prosperity.

None of what we have accomplished this year would have been possible without the help and generosity of all our friends and family. Many Thanks to **all of you** especially, Migdalia Llerena, Adela Bell, Hilda Caso, Stefenon Family, Mr. & Mrs. Rygiel, Rosabal Family, DePozo Family, Sarah Lopez and Family, Rutigliano Family, Martin Family, Helen Przeszlo, Sandra J. Saposnik, Tom (from the Belleville Post office), Edid & Berta Hernandez, Mr. & Mrs. Del Valle, Ester and Estela Prado, the Zadie Family, Helene Olejar, Velazquez Family. Milanese Family, Victoria Del Guercio, Ketay Family, Christopher & Lauren Ojeda & Family, Danielle Palmieri & Family, Estevez Family, Angela & Carlos Torres, Praxedes Estevez & Family, Torres Family, to my Grandparents Abu & Aba, and to my Godmother Randy and Terry,

As always to Mimi and Pipo... we would not be who we are without your direction and example.

In loving memory of Luis Romero for supporting us even during his last days.

### Chorus of Communities

On December 4<sup>th</sup> we had the privilege and the honor to welcome The CHORUS OF COMMUNITIES to our parish Queen of Peace Church in North Arlington, N.J. We are very happy to say that this year all proceeds of this harmonious concert will be donated to Stephen's Mission. This will allow us continue to help many sick and unfortunate children and their families.

The program featured selections from George Handel's "Judas Maccabaeus" and his "Messiah" as well as a selection of



contemporary Christmas music. The event was a memorable one and one we will not soon forget. We would like to thank all who attended. We would especially like to thank Rev. Nancy Moore and her husband, Rev. Bill Moore, for all their hard work in putting this event together. We would also

like to thank Rev. Msgr. William J. Fadrowski of Queen of Peace Church for helping us welcome this group into our parish and providing me with this great opportunity.



Stephen with Rev. Msgr. William J. Fadrowski & Rev. Nancy Moore



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### Spreading Christmas Joy at UMDNJ

On December 8<sup>th</sup> Stephen's classmate, Sarah Lopez and her mother, Mrs. Dolores Lopez, joined



us as we tried to spread some Christmas Joy at University Hospital. Thanks to Sarah and so many of you that donated toys, reading books, coloring books, crayons, and stuffed animals, we were able to provide everyone on the pediatric floor, as well as the ICU, with a toy and a goodie bag.



It was fun to see the children's faces as we greeted them with gifts. Some of the children seemed surprised and

others even a little scared, so we quickly showed them the toys and they would repay us with a great big smile.

Many of the staff were calling us Santa's helpers and laughing as we pushed our toy-filled carts throughout the hall. As I heard their laughs and saw their smiles, I realized that it was not just the kids we were making happy. In some small way we touched the



hearts of many. We are very grateful to the staff of University Hospital, especially Mrs. Mary Mathis-Ford, and Albert Perrella for allowing us this opportunity. I hope you enjoy these pictures of us as we visit with some of the children and their families, but as always, visit our website for more pictures.



As you can see, even the smallest of patients received a gift today ☺

The hospitalized children were not the only ones that received a nice surprise today. As we distributed the toys from room to room, we ran into Paul Honcharruk, the nurse that was assigned to me while I was hospitalized here three years ago. You can imagine our surprise when he recognized me and tried to make me laugh like he did when





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I was there. My Mom could not resist and we asked him to pose for a picture.

In addition to the toys and goodie bags we were also able to donate many used items for the thrift shop as well as some new items for the border babies and pediatric play room, such as a stroller, car seats, mobiles, bibs, socks, and toys. We would like to thank all of you that contributed and made this visit possible. We would especially like to thank my Godmother, Randy Toledo that helped us out by donating many of the items donated today.



**Thanks Nina, you're the Best!!**

### Food/Toy Drive

We are very happy to report that the food/toy drive sponsored by Dr. Ruffalo at the A T.E.A.M



Approach Chiropractic and Physical Therapy Center, in Bloomfield, NJ was a huge success. As you can see Dr. Ruffalo did a great job spreading the word and gathering the items for us. The amount collected was beyond our expectation. There are no words that could properly

express our gratitude to Dr. Ruffalo, his family, and his wonderful staff. We would never have been able to do this without all of their help.



### Nicholas Ruffalo

Since we started our mission three years ago, we have meet many generous people, and heard many heart felt stories. We don't always report them, but we wanted to share with you today one of these very special people that we have had the good fortune of meeting. This person is *Nicholas Ruffalo* a 6 year old boy with the heart of gold. His father, Dr. Ruffalo meet us this summer and as all of you know, he has joined our mission and helped us enormously. Generosity seems to run in the family as we soon learned of Nicholas' idea.



Nicholas was celebrating his 6<sup>th</sup> birthday recently and decided to donate some of his toys to the toy drive that his father was running to benefit our mission. Thanks to his generosity, and to many people like him, many unfortunate children will be able to have a brighter holiday season this year. We are very grateful to the Ruffalo Family and wish to thank them for all they have done.



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### Christmas in Clara Maass Medical Center

On December 15<sup>th</sup> Dr. Ruffallo and his son Nicholas joined us as we gathered all the toys and food from the food/toy drive and delivered them to Clara Maass Medical Center. The food collected will go to the



Safe House at Clara Maass and the toys will be distributed to the hospitalized

children during this Christmas Season. Along with all the toys we were also very fortunate to be able to donate some goodie bags donated by one of Stephen's very dear friend and classmate, Daniella Rutigliano and her family. Every goodie bag consisted of a large puzzle book, a cute stuffed animal, and pencil. I am sure all of these gifts will help make these children's hospital stay a little less scary. Also delivered today was an infant car seat donated by Randy Toledo.

It was very nice to have Nicholas and his Dad join us on this very special visit. We hope they enjoyed it as much as we did.



Dr. Ruffallo, Martha, Stephanie, Gabriela, Nicholas Ruffalo, Stephen, and Thomas A. Biga, Executive Director

### In The News

On November 24, 2005 the Belleville Times featured a story regarding our participation in the October 2<sup>nd</sup> Essex County Bar Association's eighth annual Race Judicata, a 5K race and family fun run. It was reported that the Race Judicata raised \$3,000, which will be equally shared by Clara Maass Medical Center and the victims of Hurricane Katrina.



We will once again like to thank everyone that participated and made this event possible.

Please visit our website for a readable copy of this article and as always more pictures of all the events from this month.



**Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year to all.**