

CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

Antigonish volunteers work hard to fulfil need

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Rose Hayne is actually the person who checks the list twice.

At least, for Antigonish County she is.

"I don't have kids or grandkids of my own and most of my family is away," said Hayne.

"So it's just nice to help out."

She's plugged away for about 200 hours over the past month sorting through the more than 2,000 toys collected by the Monsignor Hugh MacPherson Knights of Columbus.

"She's got a bed out back," joked toy drive co-ordinator Clarence Deyoung.

Deyoung and his nearly 50 volunteers have gathered a horde of new toys, clothes, shoes and boots from local businesses, individuals and volunteer fire departments.

They've also got applications for 314 children — parents show up with identification, proof of being recipients of the child tax benefit, and the age, interests and sizes of their children.



Rose Hayne holds one of the toys collected for a toy drive in Antigonish County.

Armed with those sheets, it's up to Hayne to decide what ends up

under the tree for each child, aged 10 to 13. "This one wanted a jacket and I'm just lucky we had one that

would fit her," said Hayne, working through her list.

It's not easy to meet all the

needs.

Deyoung starts early in the fall checking the toy aisles of local stores and reading on the internet predictions about what this year's "it" toys will be.

Some people donate money, so he has a budget to buy what they don't get donated.

"A few years back it was Elmo and he's actually come back a bit this year," said Deyoung.

"But this year it's Fingerlings and LOL Dolls."

He found the dolls locally but the Fingerlings were all sold out for miles around.

Then his son, Roy, found them at a Toys "R" Us in Toronto.

Deyoung had him clear them out, buying 50, and mail them to Antigonish.

By Friday they had most of their orders finished and delivered, with each child getting four or five items.

"Over the last seven years the amount of children we've been helping has remained pretty steady," said Deyoung.

"But what we really noticed this year was how many people wanted to come and help out, one way or another. I'm not sure what it is but it's good to see."