

September 2012

# Miles of Smiles

Volume 1

Toys for God's Kids Newsletter

Number 1

## **Toys for God's Kids --A Commitment to Children**

By Rita Krupp

Marlin Dorhout seems truly amazed that his dream of providing toy cars to needy children has blossomed into a worldwide endeavor. But in just 12 years more than 400,000 small wooden cars have been made and distributed, without charge, to children in 120 countries. It's a labor of love and commitment embraced by this hobby woodworker, his wife Marlene, and a growing number of dedicated helpers throughout the USA. "Toys for God's Kids" is now a growing 501c(3) public charitable foundation with procurement, production, distribution, marketing, and quality control and finance all managed by volunteers and overseen by a volunteer executive board. In fact, the low budget of TFGK is truly a tribute to all who are passionate about the mission of Toys for God's Kids.

### **Realizing a Need**

In 2000, Marlin and his friend Ben Perri

### **FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>A commitment to Children</b>             | <b>1</b> |
| <b>An Interview with Dutch</b>              | <b>5</b> |
| <b>Notes from the Chairman of the Board</b> | <b>2</b> |

volunteered with Habitat for Humanity to build homes in Nicaragua. They packed the wooden toys they had made and passed them out to the children in the village where they were building houses. The children were thrilled, and Marlin suddenly knew what he would be doing during his retirement years.

When he returned to Denver, Marlin set out to recruit others to help construct the sturdy toys. They decided to brand each car with a "USA" license plate and stamp "Toys for God's Kids" on every toy. Generally, the toys are packed in the luggage of missionaries and others traveling to wherever there are needy children. Pictures of the kids' smiling faces are the only reward requested.

### **Basic Areas of Support**

Volunteers who enjoy building wooden cars are called Smilemakers. They

**(Continued on Page 5)**

## **NOTES FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A Message from the Chairman

Jerry Krupp – CEO

Why do we need a Board of Directors for TFGK? This question is usually followed by “What do they do anyway?” A charitable organization that has functioned well for seven years now needs regulations and requirements? How will that help you make and donate cars? All the members of your Board share these same concerns. Please let me explain our new situation and the Board’s function.

A year ago, at the request of Marlin and Marlene Dorhout, TFGK legally changed from a private foundation to a Public 501c(3) Charity, registered in the State of Colorado. The change was made for two reasons; first, to ensure that this wonderful charity will continue long after we are gone, “in perpetuity”.

Secondly, this change fulfilled the need to share the increasing workload that Marlin and Marlene were doing to keep the charity going. These are the primary goals of the Board.

**(Continued on Page 3)**

## **NOTES FROM THE EDITOR**

Welcome to the first issue of the Toys for God’s Kids Newsletter. My name is Faye Kitchen and I have agreed to help get our newsletter started.

After we moved to Colorado, I found an article about a group of devoted woodworkers who were helping to make a difference in the lives of poor children around the world with their gifts of small wooden cars. Luckily, I was able to volunteer.

What is so unique about TFGK is that while others emphasize important clothing, food, and shelter for children living in poverty; our organization “fills in the gaps” and makes these children realize they are valued and loved because someone thought enough of them to give them a small toy.

I value your input and suggestions about our future issues and how we can make our newsletter better. Also, if you have a picture of your Smilemaker’s group or of children who have received cars, please email them to me at [LKitchen1@hotmail.com](mailto:LKitchen1@hotmail.com) We will use them in future issues.

David Berger had a very successful career in financial management. He now uses his experience in handling the treasurer's responsibility for TFGK. In addition, David is working with Kohl's, a major corporate sponsor of our organization.

Marlene Dorhout is the Director of Communications. This entails working with all areas of our business. Over the years, she has been Marlin's partner and chief supporter.

Lawrence Kitchen shares his wealth of knowledge and experience in Finance with TFGK in the area of Fundraising. He works to develop long term funding streams for our continued growth.

Jerry Krupp, your Chairman, began as a Smilemaker about 8 years ago, starting a group in Castle Rock, CO. He worked closely with the Dorhouts and found his corporate planning expertise was even more valuable to TFGK, guiding it through the transition to a public foundation.

Rita Krupp serves as Board Secretary. In addition, she uses her nursing experience in Gerontology to coordinate the Senior Support Service.

Andy Morris serves as Vice Chairman of TFGK. His broad corporate experience is useful in many areas, including

long range planning and Website development.

Alvin "Dutch" Van Maaren wears several hats while serving on the Board. He works closely with Marlin to develop techniques and standards for production

All of our Board Members are interested in helping you. Our email addresses are included and you are encouraged to communicate if you have questions, comments or concerns. You are also welcome to join any of the committees. We need your support! It is our hope that this Newsletter will encourage communication and fellowship between all who serve this organization. These are the primary goals of the Board.

Thank you for all you do for Toys for God's Kids!

**DECEMBER 2012 MILES OF SMILES  
NEWSLETTER**

Our feature story will be about toy distribution. Some Smilemakers say this is one of the most satisfying parts of the process. Do you have pictures of children who have received your gift of toys or experiences you would like to share with our readers? Please send us your contributions. Anything you contribute can be emailed or mailed to us. All photos will be returned. We will also be doing a story about TFGK's Ambassadors. Who are the Ambassadors in your organization and how do they contribute? Please let us know at

[LKitchen1@hotmail.com](mailto:LKitchen1@hotmail.com)

# TOYS FOR GOD'S KIDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                  |                |  |
|------------------|----------------|--|
| David Berger     | Treasurer      | <a href="mailto:gsbperfectharmony@comcast.net">gsbperfectharmony@comcast.net</a> |
| Marlene Dorhout  | Board Member   | <a href="mailto:toysforgodskidskids@aol.com">toysforgodskidskids@aol.com</a>     |
| Marlin Dorhout   | President      | <a href="mailto:toysforgodskids@aol.com">toysforgodskids@aol.com</a>             |
| Lawrence Kitchen | Board Member   | <a href="mailto:lkitchen@chicagobooth.edu">lkitchen@chicagobooth.edu</a>         |
| Jerry Krupp      | Board Chairman | <a href="mailto:rkrupp16@aol.com">rkrupp16@aol.com</a>                           |
| Rita Krupp       | Secretary      | <a href="mailto:rkrupp16@aol.com">rkrupp16@aol.com</a>                           |
| Andy Morris      | Board Member   | <a href="mailto:jamorr6964@gmail.com">jamorr6964@gmail.com</a>                   |
| Dutch Van Maaren | Board Member   | <a href="mailto:dutch7179@comcast.net">dutch7179@comcast.net</a>                 |



**Board of Directors:** (Left to Right) Standing: Marlin Dorhout; Dutch Van Maaren; Lawrence Kitchen; Dave Berger Sitting: Marlene Dorhout; Andy Morris; Jerry Krupp; Rita Krupp

*photo by Gloria Berger*

## **(Continued from Page 1)**

### **--A Commitment to Children**

share the joy of bringing smiles to children everywhere. They labor alone or in groups in workshops across the country.

People who formerly got up merely to exist another day now had an exciting project to perform. Smilemaking proved to be therapeutic. Assisted living facilities expressed interest in helping and the TFGK Board responded.

### **Techniques and Equipment**

Toys for God's Kids has come a long way since 2000, when Marlin constructed the first wooden cars using a band saw and drill press. Now the group is involved with advanced techniques and equipment.

Many new car styles have been developed by Smilemakers in their workshops all over the country. Smaller sized "pocket" cars have been made for homeless kids (Haitian refugees) to meet their special needs.

All the Smilemakers produce their own wheels utilizing specially designed hole saws that are engineered and milled by, again, volunteers.

The group is now experimenting with several CNC machines which should increase car production and enhance quality. One enterprising Smilemaker has designed a process that cuts out car bodies using a router attached to a pantograph.

## **Other Missions**

It did not take TFGK's volunteers long to realize that they were having as much fun as the kids receiving the toys.

A Senior Support Service has been developed for adults at assisted living facilities. Under supervision individuals, with limited skills and tools, can assemble these toy cars. Materials and training are provided to help them become part of the TEAM and gain satisfaction, helping children.

Kohl's department stores in the Denver area also assist TFGKs in car production. Smilemakers deliver a box of car parts to Kohl's who assemble the cars as a community service project and then return the finished cars to TFGK for distribution.

### **Ambassadors**

Even those without wood-working skills have their role to play in the TFGK's organization. TFGK has designated "Ambassadors" to provide other support. (An article in the December issue of Miles of Smiles will examine the duties of our Ambassadors.)

So many things have happened since the first wooden cars were distributed 12 years ago. Today, Toys for God's Kids is a thriving charity, committed to bringing Smiles to kids everywhere with its simple wooden cars. Thanks to Marlin, his Big Heart, and his Dream.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH DUTCH

By Gloria Berger

Gloria, TFGK's Ambassador and ace photographer, recently met with Alvin Van Maaren (Dutch) to interview him for our newsletter. In a question and answer session, here are some of the things she found out about Dutch--master wood worker and Smilemaker extraordinaire.

--Editor

The Interview:

Q: Could you tell me something about yourself?

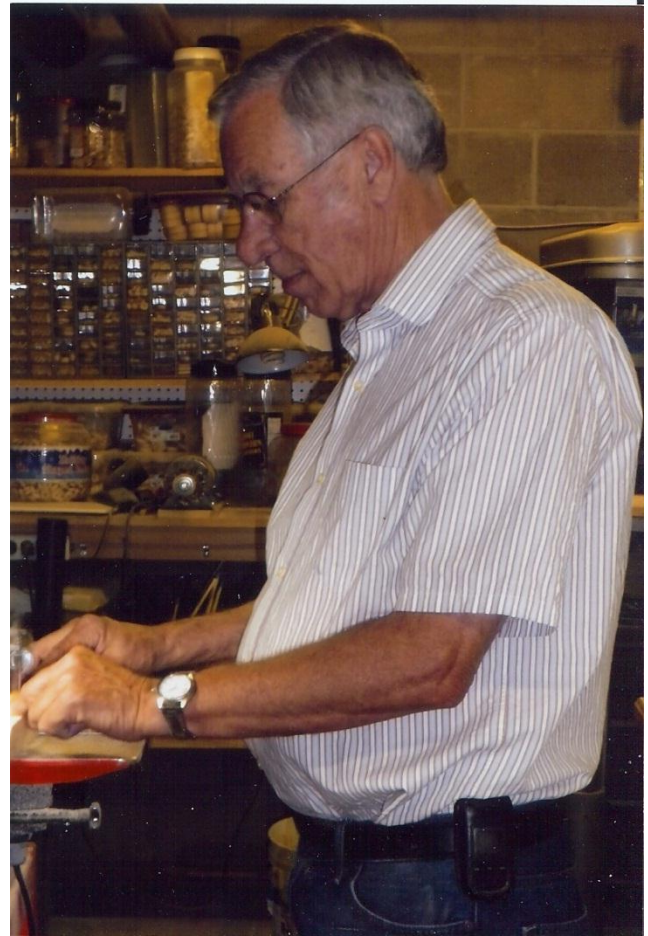
A: I was born in 1940 and grew up on an Iowa farm in the 1940's and 1950's, the eldest of 7 children. All of us were born at home. I attend Cherry Hills Community Church. I will not accept money for my woodworking--all my projects are gifts.

Q: What is the significance of your name?

A: It was a high school nickname.

Q: How long have you lived in Colorado?

A: Since 1961, when I moved from Kellogg, Iowa.



Dutch in His Workshop  
*Photo by Gloria Berger*

Q: Could you tell me something about your family?

A: I have a wife Nancy, 2 daughters Kalli and Karna, and 3 grandchildren.

Q: What did you do before retirement?

A: I was in management at Gates Rubber; I retired 21 years ago.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

**(Continued from Page 6)**

### **An Interview with Dutch**

Q: How long have you been involved with TFGK's and woodworking?

A: I've been involved with TFGK's for 8-10 years; I learned woodworking from my dad.

Q: What do you think the future holds for TFGK's?

A: I'm not sure. This generation does not seem interested; they are preoccupied with school and extra-curricular activities.

Q: Where is your workshop located?

A: It's at 4761 E. Costilla in Centennial, Colorado.

Q: How many cars do you build in a year?

A: About 10 thousand, but I have some help with assembly.

Q: Do you do any woodworking besides building cars?

A: Yes, I started with mantel clocks. I also build an assortment of vehicles, children's games, banks, and wall hangings.

Dutch's kindness, integrity, and craftsmanship are apparent in

everything he does. We are pleased that he agreed to an interview for the first issue of Miles of Smiles.



An example of Dutch's mastery *Photo by Gloria Berger*



Entry Sign at Dutch's Shop

*Photo by Gloria Berger*

# SMILEMAKER REPORTS

## **Jerry Clark**

I am located in Broomfield in the summer with a few tools in my garage and the rest of my tools located in the wood shop located in the Broomfield Senior Center. In the winter, my wife Lois and I live in a mobile home in Tucson, AZ, and I have a work shop in a shed on the patio.

In Tucson I am the only Smilemaker in my group, but I keep looking for more help. As the word gets out as to what I do, people offer wood for me to use.

In Broomfield our group keeps growing, with men at the Senior Center helping in many ways. Some cut out cars and some help cut the wood to make the cars. Some have suggestions as to who would like to have some cars. Today I was introduced to the teacher at Abracadoodle, a children's painting class; and, at the next meeting, the class will be painting their own little cars. Bob Forrey, one of the supervisors of the woodshop, has joined me as well and is just as busy as I am. Also, through the help of Kathy Leverett, we have just added a ladies' group at the Broomfield Christian Church who has volunteered to put wheels on our cars. We have also just added another Smilemaker, Ollie Hux, who will keep busy cutting out bodies. We are also trying to add a group from Kohl's Department Store to put wheels on the cars. So, as you can tell, we have quite a group of Smilemakers.

Bob and I are the only ones who do whole cars from start to finish, but as we continue, I am sure we will have more. It is important that we have Bob here in the winter to keep the group going and add new members.

I have only been a Smilemaker for two years, so I am just learning about the groups that are in need of our Smilemakers. I talk to any ministries that do anything for kids and offer our product. Most, if not all, are very happy to receive what we have to offer. I also contact day care centers and have also been in contact with an adult day care program to see if we can do anything to bring smiles to these people.

In Tucson, I do the same thing, and I have added the firemen and police to the list at Christmas time. We have also sent many cars with groups that go into Mexico and do short ministries with churches. They all love having cars to give and bringing smiles to children's faces.

The special thing about our group is the way everyone is always looking for ways to spread smiles wherever they go. They are also always looking for raw material for us to use. You can help by giving us information about people and places that need to have a Smile.



# SMILEMAKER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

**We realize that there are many Smilemakers who are not getting credit for all the work that they do for Toys for God's Kids, simply because nobody knows what they do or how involved they are. We would like to recognize these Smilemakers in future issues of Miles of Smiles. If you know of Smilemakers who need recognition, send us their names so that we can interview them.**

**We also need your group's Smilemaker report.** Below are some questions to get you started. When you're finished with your report, email it to us at [LKitchen1@hotmail.com](mailto:LKitchen1@hotmail.com) Or if you prefer to mail your report, please send it to: Toys for God's Kids, 2280 S. Grant Street, Denver, Colorado, 80210. Thanks for your help.

Where are you located?

How many Smilemakers are in your group and what are their names?

Explain what you do. Are you a body maker, assembler, distributor, etc.

Do you participate in any Senior Center Activities to produce cars?

Where do you donate your cars?

Do you have photos you can share?

What special things would you like us to know about your group?

How can we provide better support?

What else would you like us to know?