



Welcome to the TFGK
December 2014 issue of
Miles Of Smiles



But first...

We wish to all our dedicated SmileMakers, Crew Chiefs,
Friends and Donors,

A Merry Christmas,
Happy Holidays
and a
Very Happy and Fruitful
New Year!





MILES OF SMILES

The Newsletter of Toys for God's Kids

Editor's Notes

This and future issues of the newsletter will have to do without the talents of Faye Kitchen who has been our editor since the first issue in December of 2011. Under Faye's guidance, Miles of Smiles has steadily grown to become our most important means of communicating with SmileMakers and Friends alike. Thanks Faye, for all your time, talent and effort. We'll try to do as well as you.

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News From TFGK Central



Marlin Dorhout has been elected chairman of the board of directors as **Andy Morris** has stepped down from that position. Marlin, whose dedicated efforts to build the TFGK SmileMaker organization since it's founding in 2000, will concentrate on furthering the strategic goals of the charity as it moves to expand its mission and its impact on the less fortunate children of the world.

New board member **Bob Gullian** will be assuming Marlin's role in overseeing the day-to-day needs of over 250 SmileMakers of the 50 Chapter and Workshops in 17 states. Bob brings to TFGK extensive financial experience as a tax partner with an international CPA firm and as an independent advisor to high income individuals.

Treasurer **Lawrence Kitchen** has announced that he will not seek reelection to the board at the end of his term on December 31. During his tenure, Lawrence overhauled the charity's financial reporting system to provide a modern, transparent system of measuring the charity's financial activities. He will be succeeded in the treasurers role by Peter Scifo. Peter is president of a business consultancy organization with long experience in the area of fostering the growth of small businesses.

Original board member Alvin (Dutch) Van Maaren will also leave the board at the end of the year but will continue in his role of SmileMaker in The Villages CO Workshop. Dutch has provided valuable technical knowledge and insights into the techniques and mindsets of our SmileMakers.

Welcome New SmileMakers

Byron Center MI

Bob Dodde

Paul Hendriksen

Sun City #1 AZ

Ron Boyer

Grand Haven MI

Ken TerMolen - Crew Chief

Clare Robison, Tom Daniel,

Ron Oele, Bob Parker,

Bob Schouman, Ken Souter,

Phil Paul, Joe Cook

Lehman Hoag Jr. of Heather Gardens CO sends this idea. "Tip; take your cars to church. I brought 200 bodies plus enough axles and wheels to Augustana Lutheran church and had their youth group finish out the cars. They had a great time and did a fine job."

Ken TerMolen of the Grand Haven MI chapter must be listening as he sends us the following: The Grand Haven chapter (Covenant Life Church) made cars with about 12 special needs kids in our wood shop. We had five stations set up with one adult working at each station. Kids outlined cars, sanded, drilled holes, installed wheels and dipped. We made sure that these kids were in no way operating anything which was dangerous. All of them enjoyed the time spent in our shop and are already asking when they can do it again.

News from TFGK Central - continued

Car Count Update - Though we haven't heard from every SmileMaker, the 3rd quarter totals have been finalized. We exceeded the 2nd quarter with a total reported shipments of about **53,000** cars giving a total this year of over **126,000** cars. A number of SmileMakers noted they had a good inventory and were anticipating shipping it and more in the 4th quarter. Make some kids smile at Christmas all right!

As we trumpet at the top of each newsletter page, since our start in 2000, we've shipped over **850,000 cars** around the world.

New Chapter - Michigan has proven to be fertile ground when cultivated by **Marlin, Virgil Houtkooper** and **Tom Jongert**. We now have 4 chapters in the state: Byron Center, two in Grand Rapids, Holland Home and The Hollanders and our newest startup Grand Haven at the Covenant Life Church in Grand Haven with seven new SmileMakers. **Paul Pettinga** also has a long-standing Workshop in Grand Rapids.

Co-op Ventures - This last quarter saw TFGK working with a number of organizations to spread the word of our mission. The Denver chapter partnered with the Colorado/Wyoming Region Optimist Clubs in an afternoon-long session to assemble cars. Nearly 100 meeting attendees showed their mechanical skills by assembling over 1500 cars. Check out others in the sidebar.

Website Tips for SmileMakers - Have you explored the TFGK Central pages on our website? Go on the site at www.toysforgodskids.org and click on the TFGK Central tab in the top menu. Enter your username and password and you'll be prompted to answer a simple question. It's there to cut down on spam. Once you are on to the site you'll find our SmileMaker Roster, our manual and patterns and some handy TFGK forms. Want to meet some other SmileMakers while you are traveling? In the Roster just follow the Find instructions, type in a city and see if there are any local SmileMakers. Of course if you've lost some contact information, just type in the SmileMaker's name and you get a phone and e-mail address. And everyone, check out the SmileMaker Story video under the News menu button. You'll love it.

SmileMaker Sound Off

To Virgil and Diddy Houtkooper
 From Denis and Jeni Hoekstra

We have been handing out the little cars. The kids are just thrilled with them. Thanks for giving them to us. We'll tell you more when we are in Iowa, probably August. We are in Kenya for a month - kind of cold and rainy but it is going well. I am teaching every day and Denny is busy planning and organizing a Demonstration and Training Farm/Dairy. The people have lots of cows, but they don't give much milk and they want to encourage silage

Board of Directors
 Marlin Dorhout - Chair
 Debra Scifo - Vice Chair
 Marlene Dorhout - Secretary
 Peter Scifo - Treasurer
 Bob Gullion - Field Operations
 David Berger - Director
 Juan Botero - Director
 Bret Dorhout - Director

From **Ed and Linda Berg** - Garden City KS

In spite of the fact that Ed has had major interruptions such as his wife fracturing her hip in July, sister in law passing away in Denver in Sept. and lastly, ending up in the hospital with a blocked intestine in Oct, he pushed really hard after recovering and finished 2,367 little wooden cars to be used at the distribution center for Samaritan's Purse Christmas boxes in Denver. (Above is) a picture of the boxes stacked up at our church Family Center. ready for pickup. For a while, Ed used a rock tumbler to smooth the wheels.



From **Stan Furce** -Montgomery TX

A friend of ours was going to China to help out at a small clandestine orphanage that cares for mentally handicapped children and I offered her some toys. She could only take fifty (tho there are only 30 kids) because of Chinese Customs and weight limitations. At first the little tykes didn't know what they were but despite their handicaps they learned to roll and play with them...and throw them! The missionaries weren't allowed to take pictures so the ones (below) were surreptitiously shot. Pretty cool, huh? Makes all the effort worth every minute spent in the shop.



SmileMaker Sound Off - continued

News From Sioux Center IA
Virgil Houtkooper reports:
The Sioux Center group is currently packing up and moving to Mesa AZ for the winter months. We have built 12 new tumblers. The tumblers are lined with 50 grit ceramic sandpaper. We usually put 100 car bodies in for an hour. They come out nicely smooth and ready for assembly. We have invested \$175.00, that includes a donated \$264.00 motor by a local manufacturing company Groschopp. They are also promoting TFGK on their website. When I requested one more motor for one of our SmileMakers that needs a new motor, they brought over several more. I spent an hour with Groschopp's marketing team showing them each of the steps in making and assembling the cars. Groschopp is one of the newest corporate sponsors that's seen the vision of providing (products to) Toys For God's Kids. If you are interested in a tumbler for (yourself or) your group, Contact Virgil at virgil.houtkooper@gmail.com or at 712-441-5376. Also there are two of them at the Denver shop.



From **Bill Wiersma** - The Hollanders, Holland MI

The Butternut Tree - Bill sent us these photos of his "Hollanders" gang gathering at the sawmill to process wood from a butternut tree for toys. Looks like they will soon make some very special cars. And Bill says there is more of the story to come...



A Special Thank You...

..to all those supporters of TFGK who have shared their time, donated products, and sent us donations large and small. You make it possible to continue our mission of providing "handmade, attractive wooden toys, Free to God's children everywhere".

SmileMaker Sound Off - continued

Photos That Make Us Smile



From **Pete Kostoff**- Dayton - St. Leonards OH

I thought that you might be interested in the attached picture. This is a first for us. The director of the India mission wanted children to know who the people are that made the cars.

Ed. Note: A great idea for all SmileMakers!



Virgil Houtkooper, Midwest Regional Manager, sends us this photo of the Sioux Center IA SmileMakers in promotional mode. Note the stylish TFGK headgear.



Thanks to TFGK

From: Greg Allen-Pickett
General Manager, World Mission
Presbyterian Church (USA)

To: Mike Hooper via **Jerry Clark** -
Broomfield #2 CO

Thanks for sending the cars. We took some of them on our Moderators delegation trip to the Middle East. Attached are photos of our moderator handing out the toy cars to Iraqi refugee children in a Presbyterian church near Erbil. These children have been displaced from their homes near Mosul because of ISIS and are living on the grounds of the Presbyterian church. We visited with them for three hours and heard their stories, incredibly heartbreaking and inspiring. These are people who have made serious sacrifices for their faith.

Imagine a middle-class family, living in a comfortable suburban house with a nice yard, a car, checking accounts, etc. At 6:30 pm they are told that they have one hour to leave. They pack up as many of their worldly possessions they can in their car, leaving behind their house, furniture, clothes, etc. The banking system is shut down so they can't access their money, and now they are moving as refugees in the city they have never lived in, more than 200 miles from their home and they can't go home. They get reports from the Muslim neighbors who stayed that their house is being occupied by ISIS troops or was blown up, or converted into a mosque

One of the most telling quotes was when a woman said to us, "We left our homes with just the clothes on our backs, and those were our summer clothes. Now winter is coming."

In the midst of this unspeakable tragedy, people are witnessing to their faith. They report that ISIS would approach them and say, "You have three options: convert to Islam, leave or be killed." these people have left and lost everything they owned and have worked for. I talked to a business owner who left behind \$100,000 worth of inventory and another man who had to leave behind all of his tools which he had worked for many years to acquire and they were worth more than \$25k.

The cars were a gift to give in this tragic situation to kids who had to leave their toys behind. They brought great joy and we were very grateful that you sent them so that we could give them away.

Thank you Mike.

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From Rodger A. Dermody
Deputy Executive Director for Mission Presbyterian
Mission Agency of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

To **Ollie Hux** - Broomfield #2 CO

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the wonderful wooden cars that were sent to my office recently by our mutual friend Mike Cooper. We received an entire box containing all shapes and sizes. They are terrific. These cars will make perfect gifts for children we encounter on the various trips we frequently take as leaders of the Presbyterian Mission agency. I've personally seen the sheer joy on a child's face when given an empty water bottle. I can only imagine the reaction to receiving one of these amazing wooden cars. Several of my colleagues have trips planned this month to visit our church partners in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Palestine. You're probably aware of the acute refugee crisis, and God's kids will be delighted to receive these toys to bring some play to an otherwise extremely challenging day-to-day fight for survival. We also will be traveling to El Salvador and to Taiwan in the next month. So, as you can see, the cars will be going global in a very short timeframe.

Again thank you for your ministry and for the privilege of being able to pass along the blessing as these cars will most certainly be. May God continue to use your craftsmanship and skills to the glory of Christ and the joy of his kids

Blessings

SmileMaker Sound Off - continued

From **Bill Van Zante** - Pella IA Workshop

(Ed. note) Bill and his SmileMaker partner Ray Van Dyk comprise two of our longest-standing SmileMakers. Bill's background in manufacturing led him to use a CNC machine to cut out toys. They were one of our early SmileMakers who sparked development of the current CNC machines designed specifically for TFGK.

“A few weeks ago I was approached by a longtime friend about having a group of ladies come in for a tour. They were fascinated by the CNC machine, which makes the bodies of cars by using a program that tells the machine what to do. I went through and showed them all the different processes we went through down to the USA stamp on the back side (license plate) of the car.

All the wood we use is graciously donated by industry in and around Pella, the finished cars are packed in a box ready to ship anywhere in the world. People donate their time to making this a success story.”



Dale and Mary Anne Lewis sent us a long note along with great photos about their experiences on their trip to Haiti with the Anchor Christian Church of Bonita FL. They conducted dental clinics in 10 villages, traveling part way in a brightly painted, but rickety bus. Dale also asked for & received permission to work in a federal prison. “There were prisoners who had been complaining

about dental care for years but no dentist had ever come to the prison. Some of our team were allowed further into the prison to do Christian ministry & briefly visited many of the 400 prisoners. The need for dental care was acute & most every prisoner I treated had to have multiple extractions. As we were leaving they wanted to know when we were coming back.”

