

Foster Children...from Page 1A

volunteers who work with the program include former CASA Lorena Johnson and current CASAs Diana Smith, Pam Curley, Kathy Malone and Liz Ruf.

"I have helped wrap, I've helped deliver gifts, and the fun part is actually getting to deliver to the kids that you work with," said Ruf, who has volunteered as a CASA for 10 years. "We deliver two weeks early, so sometimes you're delivering gifts to the foster

parents, but with the older kids, sometimes the foster parents will say, let's let them open one gift while you're here.

"And it's so fun to see, because they have no idea they can get a gift like an American Doll, or just something that they've never had an opportunity to get before for Christmas."

Monetary donations can be given year-round to the Towns and Union Foster Children's Enrichment

Program, and those interested in contributing or becoming a sponsor for next Christmas can contact Elliott at (706) 896-3749, or Paolillo at (706) 745-1190.

Donations can also be made toward the program's Back to School initiative, which is the other area in which Elliott, Paolillo and friends help to normalize the experiences of children in foster care.

The Back to School part of the program takes place before the start of each school year. Foster children are given the ability to go shopping for new school supplies and a new school outfit, just like all the other kids who start school each year with new clothes and materials.

Those involved with the program would like to thank the multitude of generous supporters who for years have made Christmas mornings special for the foster children of Towns and Union, many of whom are fostered outside their home counties and school systems.

Also, program organizers would like to thank Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris for allowing them to store their hundreds of presents in the spare rooms of the old Towns/Union County Jail.



Volunteers have been working hard through December to get the presents wrapped and where they need to go before Christmas.



One generous donor gave multiple bicycles, helmets and other gifts for the Union and Towns County children in foster care.



Pat Elliott and Richard Paolillo were two of the founders of the enrichment program.

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fire truck and started CPR," said Chief Dyer. "Then the rest of us got there, EMS got there, they shocked him several times with the automated external defibrillator and got a pulse rate back, and they flew him to Northeast Georgia Medical Center."

Over the weekend, Burnette's sons and family members kept the Union County community briefed on Burnette's condition since being admitted to the hospital.

In a Facebook post made the morning after his father's accident, Marc Burnette wrote the following:

"Update on dad... Just got a report from his new nurse. He woke up and followed some basic commands this morning. His vital signs have improved greatly. They are working on backing off the medications. They are wanting to stop the cooling process and getting him awake. The prayers are working, please continue to send them."

Then, less than 12 hours later, Burnette's other son Andrew posted this update on Saturday evening: "Breathing tube is out and he is awake!!! Praise the Lord."

Chief Dyer visited

Burnette on Sunday in the Ronnie Green Heart Center, and he reported that the veteran volunteer firefighter was up and talking, answering questions, though he still had a way to go until they figured out what exactly happened.

"He's not out of the woods yet, but he's doing really well," said Chief Dyer, noting that Burnette's doctors didn't think that he had a heart attack, but that he suffered a medical emergency resulting in cardiac arrest.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris also visited Burnette on Sunday, and he, too, has been keeping people updated on Facebook as to Burnette's continually improving status.

"As soon as I walked in the room, he knew me, recognized me and said, 'Hello, Lamar,' and put his hand up to shake hands even though it was all bandaged up," said Commissioner Paris. "I was pretty impressed. His family was there, and they thought it just wasn't his time to go."

Chief Dyer agreed with that assessment, and

attributed Burnette's survival to the training and response of firefighters and EMTs who arrived on the scene to render aid to the unconscious fireman.

"We were responding to a smoke alarm too," said Chief Dyer, speaking of Station No. 1. "So, we diverted the rescue truck from the smoke alarm call to the wreck call. And I couldn't be any prouder for what our guys did. Everybody responded, everybody focused, everybody stayed calm and did what they're trained to do."

Added Chief Dyer: "These things are stressful – they're stressful and emotional, because we're not just coworkers and we're not just fellow volunteers, we're a family. And when this happens, it's rough, it's stressful and emotional, because it's part of your family that's having a problem."

"And it's really emotional when you're already responding to an emergency and then you have to turn around and work on someone that's in your department. So, I'm really proud of how our department responded. They focused, nobody got excited, and we had a good outcome."

Ashley Conley graduates Kennesaw State

Ashley Conley of Blairsville, GA graduated from Kennesaw State University on December 13 - 14, 2016.

Kennesaw State University is one of the 50 largest public universities in the country. Kennesaw State offers nearly 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees and enrolls more than 34,000 students. The University's research, scholarship, creative activities, and public service initiatives expand and apply knowledge, contribute to economic development, and improve the quality of life in local communities, Georgia, the nation and the world.

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