



THE LEAFLET

News from Family Giving Tree

2017 Holiday Wish Drive Sets New Giving Record!



Joy Delivered!

We are pleased to announce that Family Giving Tree dodged the shortfalls affecting many nonprofits this past year and achieved our goal to collect 80,000 gifts, including over 6,000 gifts earmarked for North Bay residents affected by the fire this fall.

“For 2017 it was all about ‘Joy Delivered!’ thanks to our loyal cadre of drive leaders, volunteers and corporate sponsors,” said Executive Director Jennifer Cullenbine. “With the growing Bay Area need and the North Bay fires still smoldering, last fall we set an aggressive goal of 80,000 gifts, including a stretch goal of 5,000 gifts for

North Bay families. We achieved both and in fact generated over 6,000 gifts for North Bay nonprofits. Sincere thanks to our generous donors, partners and sponsors who maintained their Family Giving Tree holiday tradition and helped us succeed when most nonprofits are struggling.”

Thank you to all of our sponsors - The Sobrato Family Foundation, the Illumina Foundation, Linda L. Lester of Lester Investment Properties, Star One Credit Union, TechCU, Rambus, Texas Instruments, CEFCU, NetApp and Gilead Sciences. Thank you to all of our volunteers, Drive Leaders and donors. Thank you for Joy Delivered!

Could there be more good news? Yes! With the 2017 Holiday Wish Drive, Family Giving Tree passed the 1.5 million served mark! Since 1990, FGT has delivered over 1,200,000 gifts and nearly 325,000 backpacks. Many hands CAN grant wishes for joy and learning!



Didn't get a chance to volunteer in the warehouse? Curious about how we process thousands and thousands of gifts? Then check out our 2017 Holiday Wish Drive Warehouse Tour. Thanks to Doug, our ever busy Angel Elf and videographer! Enjoy the ride!

And speaking of warehouses...we need one!

Even though we just finished the Holiday Wish Drive, we're already on the hunt for a warehouse for the 2018 Back-to-School and Holiday Wish Drives. If you can help, please contact:



Partnerships

2017 Holiday Wish Drive Award Winners!

Each winner made the highest donation within their category based on company size. Congratulations to all! We could not have done it without you and 80,000 Bay Area kids, seniors and homeless adults had a brighter holiday thanks to you!

Candy Cane (100 or fewer employees) – Altamont Capital Partners

Ornament (100-499 employees) – TechCU

Holly (500-999 employees) – Roche Molecular Systems

Reindeer (1,000-1,999 employees) – Illumina

Sleigh Ride (2,000-4,999 employees) – Lam Research Corporation, Fremont

Big Red Bow (More than 5,000 employees) – Google

Garland (School) – The Harker School

Tinsel (Individual Youth/Youth Group/Youth Club) – Girl Scouts Service Unit 618 - Saratoga

Snow Globe (Most Improved) – Russell Reynolds Associates

Profile



Al Galan: Family Giving Tree's Quiet Engine

By Larry Loper

It's a fair question to ask – where do you find (and hire) an Operations Director who is perfectly happy working 12-hour days, for 30 days straight in a frigid warehouse, at a pace that would pulverize most Fitbits?

Meet Alfonso Galan, who for ten years has quietly mastered exactly the job described above. One of his former jobs may have accidentally prepped him for success at

FGT. After seven-plus years as a U.S. Naval officer, Al was recruited to high-tech chipmaker IDT. His job? Fab supervisor for a team cranking out wafers and integrated circuits during a 12-hour graveyard shift – and on weekends, to boot. Not one to stop at that challenge, Al also worked part-time in another job and – who wouldn't? – also earned his Master's degree in Organizational Development from the University of San Francisco (Cupertino extension). One could see where the FGT warehouse, in daylight no less, might look appealing.

But Al did not come directly to FGT from IDT. After a promotion at IDT to the role of Supply Chain Planner, in 2000 he moved to chip giant Intel in a similar role. Nine years later, an all-too-familiar Silicon Valley tradition – layoffs – offered the opportunity for an Intel-paid 'internship' at Family Giving Tree. (To no one's surprise, Al was interviewed and hired on the same day.) The internship led to permanent roles, first as Drive Leader Manager (now occupied by Vicki Stairs) and then Operations Manager (Lauren Berryhill currently fills that role). Having learned all facets of the FGT Ops business, Al was tapped for his current job as Operations Director.

It's not just the love of logistics and hard work that makes Al such a good fit for FGT; it's also his multi-cultural background and empathy for people. Al is a native Chicagoan, has Mexican

parents and a Taiwanese wife. His parents raised him and two siblings in a traditional Polish/Irish neighborhood. After earning a ROTC scholarship to Marquette University, his Naval career put him in close quarters at sea with all races, creeds and colors. He thrived in the Navy, including ports of call from Dubai to the Philippines. He even endured a Gulf War cruise of over 55 days – so long that it earned all the crew a rare shipboard ‘beer day’!

Al Galan is no one-dimensional guy toiling in a warehouse. An avid runner, he’s completed six marathons, including one in the Swiss Alps! As a child, his musical family encouraged him on the drums, French horn, piano and guitar – and he swears one day he’ll resume training on the drums, his first love.

When asked what stands out about Family Giving Tree, Al simply says, “This is the best team we’ve had during my ten years at the Tree. I love the crew, and enjoy working with them every day.” Even if, apparently, that work is 30 days of 12 hour shifts. In a chilly Sunnyvale warehouse.

Oh, and by the way, with such a multi-cultural background, you might be wondering, “What is Al’s favorite food?” That would be ... Italian!

Drive Spotlight

Bringing Hope and Joy to North Bay Families

By Charlotte Wood

Like many other nonprofits around the Bay Area, Family Giving Tree felt called to assist those agencies that serve residents of the North Bay. Individuals and families affected by the fires, having lost everything, really needed a bright spot in this holiday season. The good news is the outreach worked and the response was overwhelming!



Through the efforts of donors and partners like Cisco, who wanted their efforts to benefit the North Bay specifically, we were able to deliver 6,000 gifts to five agencies serving the Sonoma, Santa Rosa and Petaluma areas. Above, FGT staff is shown loading one of the many U Haul trucks that came to the warehouse to pick-up gifts by the bag-full. Each truck left full to the brim and the drivers were overwhelmed by the generosity.

Cami Kahl, CEO of the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, shared, “In 2017, the challenges facing Sonoma County and our neighbors were especially daunting. We were surprised and delighted by the unexpected outreach from Family Giving Tree, which donated thousands of holiday gifts to deserving families in our area. With their help, and in a very tough season for many area residents, the Volunteer Center was able to brighten the holidays for over 30,000 individuals.”

Lisa Cannon, Director of Development and Community Partnerships for Child Parent Institute in Santa Rosa, reached out with a thank you through email: "I was absolutely BLOWN away at the level of generosity that filled that HUGE truck! I actually had tears in my eyes when George (Santa) opened the back of the truck. Bag after bag after wonderful bag, the kindness just kept coming!! Thank you a million times... this has touched many people in more need than I can explain."

We here at FGT are always touched-and invigorated-by this annual process. To see the volume of gifts that come and go in the warehouse and the obvious care with which some were shopped for; the smiles and gratitude of the agencies as they come to pick up their bags of gifts every fifteen minutes over eight days; the joy, surprise and smiles on the faces of the recipients; the thank you notes and cards that find their way to our office. Such is the nature of the Holiday Wish Drive, made even more special this year by the fact that our supporters responded to this special need in the North Bay. Yes, the goals are important, and meeting them is too, but the intangibles are even more so - the spreading of goodwill and kindness; helping someone who has nothing; spreading Joy and Hope.



The Unseen Have Wishes Too

by *Charlotte Wood*

Children: the face of the holidays with their sheer delight and ear-to-ear smiles. And while Family Giving Tree predominantly helps fulfill the wishes of tens of thousands of children, we also grant wishes to thousands of seniors and the homeless. They are the quiet side of the in-need communities, but no less deserving -- or grateful. Here's a glimpse

into how the work of the Tree - with lots of help - impacts the lives of the unseen members of our society.

Live Oak Adult Day Service has 5 facilities in the South Bay that serve hundreds of seniors during the daytime hours. Cheryl Huguenor, Program Director at the Gilroy location, wanted to share the following:

"On behalf of all the seniors and Staff at Live Oak Adult Day Services, I would like to thank you for the wonderful gifts that you provided for our elderly clients. They were thrilled to open their gifts and find watches, pajamas, books, bathrobes--all their wishes coming true! Thank you for all you do to make Christmas special for our seniors - it means the world to them!"

Adobe Services of Fremont writes, "We would like to express our thanks to you for your donation of Safeway, Amazon and [other gift cards] to Adobe Services! Your thoughtfulness and support helps [us] improve the lives of more than 4,400 adults and children each year as we work to end homelessness.

Thanks to you, more and more stories of hope and positive change can be told every year. Those stories include people like Eugene, a father who once struggled with homelessness. Eugene recently moved into Adobe's newest development...and reached his goals of obtaining custody and a home for his son. The achievements of Eugene - and many others like him - were made possible by people like you."

And by people like you. We can't say it enough! We can't do what we do without the support of all who help out. Thank you for making the season bright!



This Valentine's Day, give something other than flowers or chocolates to show your love and regard.

Make a donation to Family Giving Tree and we'll send a personalized, printed card to your loved one. (There's also a digital option, too!)

It's a win-win. Your sweetie will love you more and FGT will be better able to serve those in need because of your generosity.

For details, and to donate, click the button.

[Donate Now](#)

We are in the process of migrating and refining our email lists to assure our partners and readers are getting the information they want or need. If you'd like to continue to receive our email newsletters, we ask that you please use the sign-up form below. You can also use the form to indicate that you would like to receive information specific to the Back-to-School Drive, Holiday Wish Drive or both. It will only take a minute. Thanks!

[Sign-up](#)

Granting Children's Wishes for Joy and Learning Since 1990.

