



THE LEAFLET

News from Family Giving Tree

Full STEAM Ahead

**2018 Back-to-School
Drive Leader Registration is Now Open!**



Interested in helping get educational tools and STEAM supplies into the hands of students who can't afford them? Then sign-up to be a Drive Leader for the 2018 Back-to-School Drive. It's fast, easy and you'll be glad you did knowing that you had a part in helping thousands of Bay Area students from low-income families get the tools they need to succeed in school.

[Drive Leader Registration](#)



Or, would you rather host a Drive online?

Then request a Virtual Giving Tree (VGT) - a customizable online donation tool that offers a "catalog" of backpacks and their supplies for grades K-12. We'll help you get your VGT set up quickly, then all you have to do is share the link with your friends, family and on social media. It's a quick and easy way to send a child back to school prepared to learn while doing what you can to support your community.

To request a VGT, email: vicki@familygivingtree.org

A Whale of a Tale (ta tell ya, lad)

No, this isn't a story about sailors and the high seas, but about many hands working together to bring a measure of holiday cheer to children and families whose lives had been ravaged by fire.



Every year there is such a great need for the gifts Family Giving Tree distributes for the Holiday Wish Drive. This was especially true in 2017 given the incredible loss in the North Bay. Thousands of families lost their homes. Lost all of their possessions. Lost hope for the holidays. The good news? Family Giving Tree, through the work of seven non-profits in the North Bay Counties, was able to support these families through the donation of 6000 gifts.

Included in these gifts were some very special stuffed animals who made a unique journey into the hands of some kids who really needed the comfort they provided.

Why a Whale of A Tale? Watch the video to find out...

[Video](#)

The North Bay agencies who worked as essential partners in delivering joy were:

Petaluma Christmas Cheer • Boys and Girls Club of Marin and Petaluma •
Boys and Girls Club Napa Valley • Boys and Girls Club of Central Sonoma County •
OLE Health • Children Parent Institute • The Volunteer Center of Sonoma County

We need a warehouse!

We rely on donated warehouse space to process the thousands of backpacks and gifts we distribute every year. If you can help, or know of someone who can, please contact: info@familygivingtree.org



Profile

vol·un·teer /välən'tir/ verb **1.** freely offer to do something; offer (help) "he volunteered his services as a driver for the convoy" *synonyms:* offer, tender, proffer, put forward, put up, venture

Rose Cheng and the 'Volunteer Thing'

By Larry Loper

Volunteer Coordinator Rose Cheng looked up from her keyboard, a rare grimace



replacing her usual smile. "You're picking up CHINESE FOOD? Ugh. Anything but that! I swear to eat plain old American food for the next 30 days...." And without another word, Rose returned to work.

Why the strong reaction from a self-described 'ABC' -- American-Born Chinese -- and overt foodie? Simple: Her recent, first-time trip to mainland China had satisfied her taste for all things Chinese -- especially food -- for weeks to come.

Fortunately for Family Giving Tree, Rose has a much bigger appetite for all things related to volunteers and teaching. It started early in life, when she dreaded her regular trips to Kumon afterschool math and reading classes, and wondered how she could make those lessons more fun for the kids. Soon she was working at Kumon during high school and then college, helping pay her way through San Jose State University. (She still credits Kumon for building friendships with the children she taught, who since have grown to adulthood and now volunteer with FGT!)

With longtime love Greg moving to Long Beach, Rose followed and quickly landed with Reading Partners for her AmeriCorps assignment. Her usual hard work and dedication led to three quick promotions at Reading Partners, rising to the position of Program Manager. During a visit back to the Bay Area with Greg, Rose checked in with Milpitas-based Reading Partners regarding Bay Area jobs...only to trip over a neighboring nonprofit called Family Giving Tree. And they were hiring! Three short webcam interviews later, Rose was hired. She says the remote interview with founder and 'Queen Elf' Jennifer Cullenbine was the clincher. Jennifer, like Rose an animal lover, nurtured four rescue kittens throughout the interview – assuring Rose she had found a great leader!

Like many FGT employees, Rose's favorite thing is the people, from fellow employees to volunteers to Angel Elves. Special mention goes to volunteer Karyn W. and her children, as well as Angel Elf Nancy Raia, as their hard work and presence always feels a bit like a family reunion. Rose admires the way Nancy plunges headlong into any task for the Tree, including warehouse cleanup, and never needs a single accolade. As for employees, Rose has a special kinship with Jessica McGill of the Development team; they recently took a field trip to select Jessica's new pup Eddy from the animal shelter.

She also values her rotating weekly visits from Abilities United and LSA Homes. On more than one occasion their volunteers, appreciating the time Rose puts into all visits, have shown up with flowers or even a bottle of (Martinelli's) bubbly! Ditto for FGT's many youth volunteers such as Ryan, Julia and Alison. Ryan is a high school senior who has volunteered with FGT since 5th grade!

When she's not fighting off yet another cold in the chilly FGT warehouse, Rose can be found reading ('Pachinko' is a recent fav); doodling; or of course, cooking or eating. Ask about her favorite restaurants in the Milpitas/Fremont area – but give her a few weeks before she recommends anything Chinese.

You Can Donate A Backpack – Now!

That's right, you don't have to wait until late summer to help family Giving Tree

get started on providing 37,000 backpacks to kids from low-income families. Simply click on the button below and enjoy "shopping" on our **NEW** Virtual Giving Tree. Want to donate a backpack for a 7 year-old girl? No problem - there are lots of choices. Or how about that 12 year old boy? We've got you covered there too. Why not check it out - even your kids can get into the act! Give the gift of learning. One click. One backpack. Infinite possibilities.



[Donate A Backpack](#)

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.

