

LOCAL

EASTER BASKET GIVEAWAY

Bringing out smiles, event fulfills

■ Holiday fun, bicycles, toys included in day

By Robyn Flans
Special to The Star

Children didn't leave Ventura Rescue Mission's Easter Basket Giveaway empty-handed Saturday in Oxnard, with kids hunting eggs and adults participating in a raffle for small appliances and household items.

At the end of the hunt where all children found eggs, each child was given an age- and gender-appropriate basket filled with goodies such as games, toys, teddy bears, footballs, dolls, coloring books and crayons. There were 25 golden eggs that entitled a child to a new bicycle and 50 golden eggs that allowed children to pick a big toy.

Elvira Torolva was thrilled for her 5-year-old daughter Rosaria, who found a golden egg. Rosaria picked a colorful bike.

"Thank you," Rosaria said with a big smile.

Jacob Delarosa, 3, couldn't stop grinning after he won a bicycle. He was speechless.

His mother, Shawna Delarosa, said her 2-year-old would be able to share it with him.

"I am having a wonderful day," Delarosa said. "This is such a blessing. The mission does so many great things."

Juan Diego, 13, sat atop his new bicycle. He said he enjoys going bike riding.

"I'm pretty excited," Juan said.

Kim Watson, CEO of Project Joy Inc., helped organize the entertainment, including the Agape Mime Team and an appearance by author Chantay Brown, who read her children's book "The Princess and the Egg Shaped Diamond" to a captivated audience seated on the ground in front of her.

"The beauty of the book is the kids get a lot out of it," Brown said. "We touch on friendship, choices and love."

Brown said she wrote the book for her nieces who are children of color.

"When you try to find books that resemble them, it's difficult," Brown said. "Diversity is huge here, and we need more diversity in our books."

While children were hunting eggs and the mimes were performing, the adults were enjoying their raffle.

Guadalupe Lopez won a warm steam vaporizer, which she held along with her 5-month-old, Adrianna.

"This is great," Lopez said.

Kady Johnson, volunteer coordinator at the mission, said about 25 volunteers helped during the event. Johnson added that none of it would have been possible without generous donations from the community.

"We can't do all this without them," Johnson said. "Even some anonymous donations came in at the last minute. We have such incredible support."



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