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A good time was had by all *Church's party at Shady Hill lifts the spirits of residents, and even Santa gets a present*

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Christmas arrived early in Shady Hill Trailer Park this year.

Santa rode on a Yamaha motorcycle, and dozens of members of Cornerstone Assembly of God came bearing gifts. Each child in the trailer park was given a plastic box stuffed with goodies.

"Look, a baby doll," said Skye Wells, 3, picking up her special present and hugging it.

For two hours Sunday night, residents sang songs and munched on ketchup-covered hot dogs and homemade cookies. It was a holiday party on a grand scale, complete with live music, prayer and a big guy in a big red suit.

It was also further proof that this middle-class church from suburban Chesterfield County has found a home in Shady Hill, which has earned a reputation for drugs, prostitution and crime and is one of the area's toughest mobile-home communities.

Recently, the church placed a trailer of its own in Shady Hill with plans to perform outreach there, as well as after-school programs for area children. Residents at Sunday's party said the church is already making a difference.

"It's like our spirits have come up a little bit," said Trisha Reamy, who lives in a trailer with 10 family members.

Reamy said Cornerstone has done a lot for the community but that Sunday's party stood out. Members of the church backed their cars into the trailer park and opened the trunks. Inside were stacks and stacks of presents.

"It was special," Reamy said.

Community Pastor Shawn Franco, who has been active in the trailer park for months, said, "We want to bless them."

Church member Sam Tinsley took center stage at the festivities. A long line of children waited to tell him what they wanted for Christmas. But the children didn't know they were also giving the man in the red suit a gift this year.

Tinsley recently had a tumor removed from his head. He starts radiation treatments this week.

"It helps," he said of interacting with the children.

"I just have to guard my heart. The kids are so sweet," he said. "Some of them come from pretty tough situations. There is not a whole lot as a person that I can do."

"But at least for one day, I can do this," he said.

Samual Hinson, who lives in a trailer park across the street from Shady Hill, came over to tell Santa what he wanted this year.

"I told him I wanted two bikes," the 5-year-old said. "Two wheelers, red ones."

When asked why he wanted two bikes, the freckled boy said, "In case one of them breaks."

His dad, Donnie Hinson, shook his head when he heard his son's wish.

He said he already bought presents for his three children this year at Dollar Tree and that he could not afford a bike -- let alone two.

"It hurts as a parent," Hinson said. "When you get that disability check, that's all you've got. There is no extra. There is no way you can do it."

Hinson said his children will understand, adding that Sunday's party was real treat for them.

"It made them feel good," he said.

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