

Parady Financial Baby Shower Benefits Families

The fifth annual baby shower benefitted hundreds of local families by donating clothes, diapers, toys and more.

By MADDIE CUTLER
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Parady Financial's fifth annual baby shower on Thursday collected items that will benefit more than 1,000 people in the tri-county area.

Greg Parady and his wife Jenni started the baby shower five years ago when they were preparing for their third child.

"A lot of clients and people in the community wanted to throw us a shower, but we were at a point where we didn't need anything," Parady said. "So, we decided to use the generosity of others to help people in need."

Parady Financial employees and people in the community spent time collecting onesies, diapers and wipes, blankets, pacifiers and other items.

"I love doing this event, the philanthropy we do is a part of what we are all about," Parady said. "And this event has gotten bigger and bigger each year, it's amazing."

Linda Bennett, director of

events at Parady Financial, said she gets excited before each big event they hold.

"We help in every area we can; veterans, kids, autism and Alzheimer's," she said. "It is so touching to see the physical display of how much people care."

On Friday, there were four large moving trucks parked outside Parady Financial in Colony Professional Plaza. Each one contained items for delivery to different nonprofits.

Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Infant and Toddler Pantry, Children's Home Society and the Pregnancy and Family Care Center all got hundreds of diapers, wipes and more to help the families they serve.

Rachel Caruso, assistant director of the Pregnancy and Family Care Center, said the item they go through the most is diapers.

"Our families come regularly for diapers, and if we didn't get donations we wouldn't be able to establish the relationships with our clients the way we do."

One item Caruso said the facility needs but does not see often is car seats. Donated car seats do not have to be brand new, but they cannot be expired or have been in a car crash.

"We can't use those seats, they are voided," Caruso said. "So if you don't know the expiration, new is best."

Melissa O'Meara, supervisor of the Children's Home Society Healthy Families program, said they could not operate without donations.

"Our program is an in-home parent program where we visit once a week for about an hour with families and work with them on building skills and achieving goals they have for themselves," she said. "The goal is to have them feel confident and self-sufficient."

Parents with children who are three months old can enroll in the program, and remain in the program until their child turns 5 if desired.

"It's free of charge, and there is no requirement like income to be approved for it," O'Meara said. "Our goal is to have happy and healthy parents and kids."

Leslie Adams is the director of the Infant and Toddler Pantry with the Congressional Church in Summerfield.

Adams said seeing what people in The Villages do for organizations like hers always blows her away.

"We benefit from when people throw these baby showers and it is so wonderful," she said. "Every little thing helps."

For Marge Felix, office manager of Hands of Mercy Everywhere, donations do double duty.



Photos by Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

Jackson Hart, left, of Parady Financial and Pam Masur, of the Village of Charlotte, carry in baby supplies during the 5th annual Parady Baby Shower at Parady Financial.

"When people give us clothes and other items, it helps offset other costs because we can then spend funding elsewhere," she said.

Hands of Mercy Everywhere serves teen girls and mothers as well as their children. They receive mental health counseling, education and learn life skills like health, nutrition, independence.

"We're breaking ground on a new school in June," Felix said. "So this donation is coming just in time."



Kenny Adamic, of Hands of Mercy in Belleview, helps unload baby supplies collected from the baby shower.

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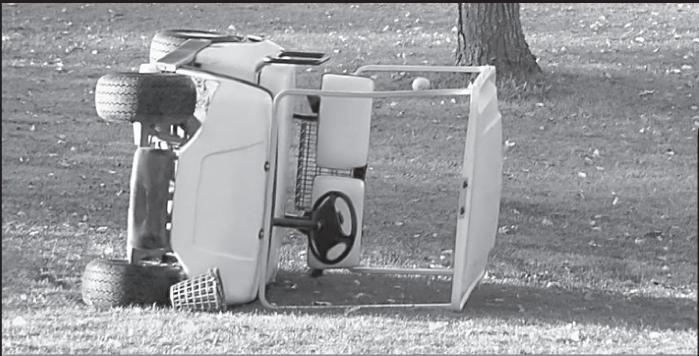


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