



REACH Members getting ready to go to Harbor House.



Working together to sort the toys by gender and age.



Thanks to great teamwork, all the toys were finally sorted!



Counting up the many toys that were collected.

R.E.A.C.H. Brings Joy During the Holidays

■ By Priscilla Leung 📷 Joanna Kiang and Stephen Lau

Barbie dolls, Scrabble, and Hot Wheels toy cars were just a few of the many toys REACH collected across Central Florida for the children at Harbor House, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. This past December, REACH began collecting toys from many schools and local businesses. With the help of local schools and businesses, parents, students, and other members of the community, REACH members collected over 270 donated toys that were given to families at the shelter. On December 20th, REACH members handed out toys to the children at Harbor House and played Christmas music for the families to enjoy. It was heartwarming to see that every child was able to receive a toy they liked that night. Seeing the smiles on their faces was a reward in itself. Not only did we share joy with these children during the holidays, but it was also a great opportunity for REACH members to reflect on their own lives. Living in a materialistic world, we often assume that happiness comes from the things we get—iPods, new cell phones, the lat-

est video games. However, going to Harbor House and being able to see how these simple gifts brightened up the children's day, taught us a valuable lesson that we will not forget: to be grateful for what we already have. Koichi Kanaoka, a student from Winter Park High School, realized "the diverse situations that people have in our community. I'm thankful that REACH offered this opportunity to allow us to bring happiness to unfortunate people." Hans Lau, President of REACH, commented, "This was an excellent experience for us to interact with the children and their families and to bring a little Christmas spirit to them. I can see that Harbor House puts in a lot of effort to keep all the families safe." Students from Cypress Creek, Celebration, Dr. Phillips, Lake Mary, Seminole, University, and Winter Park High School helped collect toys. Several middle schools also participated in the collection. REACH is thankful to have participating organizations such as Asian American Chamber of Commerce, Asian American Heritage Council, CHARGE Orlando, Chinese American As-

sociation of Central Florida, Florida College of Integrative Medicine, and Teens Go Green who helped promote the toy drive and collect toys for REACH. REACH also collected toys from generous local businesses, including Bento Café, China Garden Restaurant, Dr. Gary King's Office, the Law Office of Agnes Chau, Mochi Frozen Yogurt, Osaka Japanese Steakhouse, and Phuoc Loc Tho Super Oriental Market. Thank you again for your support and help with this toy drive!



Priscilla Leung is currently a student at Winter Park High School in the International Baccalaureate program. She enjoys creative writing, photography, baking desserts, playing violin, and tennis. Not only is she an active officer of REACH, but she also dedicates her time to various clubs at Winter Park, including Asian American Association, Spanish Club, Beta Club, and National Honor Society. She serves as an editor of the IB Newspaper. In the future, she plans on studying pediatric dentistry or orthodontics.