



Volunteers of America® Kentucky

December, 2008

Our 21st annual Gingerbread House Contest and Auction attracted 75 entries and a crowd of well-wishers in support of homeless families in the Lexington, Kentucky area.

Each year this Lexington holiday tradition attracts scores of community members and organizations who create gingerbread houses. The houses were displayed at the Lexington Downtown Hotel where visitors could select their favorites by voting at \$1 per vote. The houses were then sold at the breakfast auction on December 5th.

All proceeds ultimately provide real housing for homeless families with children through the *Lexington Family Housing Program* that has served homeless families in Lexington and Fayette County for more than twenty years.

Volunteers of America President and CEO, Jane Burks, told the gathering that the fastest growing segment of homelessness is among families. She said that Volunteers of America “helps families regain stability and overcome the obstacles that prevent them from accessing safe and affordable housing. More than 90% of families who exit the program succeed in acquiring permanent housing.”

A former client of the program, Tonya Moore, told how Volunteers of America gave her “the blessing of safe, affordable housing, supportive services and the gift of time and a vision to achieve the goals I set out to meet.” As she left a relationship of domestic violence, Volunteers of America helped her find housing, arrange transportation, apply for food stamps, and even helped arrange for school clothes and supplies for her children. Tonya is now working and pursuing a college degree.

Guest speaker, Karen Thomas, shared scripture and timely anecdotes of the intrinsic joy of those who share their time, talent and treasure.

The winners of the Gingerbread House Contest are:

Elementary

First Place: God’s Team Class, Christ Church Cathedral “The White House”

Second Place: Camren Reid, Athens Chilesburg Elementary “Santa of the Caribbean”

Middle School

First Place: Katie Coyer, Joseph Wrightson, Casey Ren, Erin Matthews and Ailee Matthews, SCAPA of the Bluegrass “Charlie Brown Christmas”

Second Place: Leia Wedlund, Anna Smith-Sargent, Emily Farrer and Maeve Draper, SCAPA of the Bluegrass “Igloo”

High School

First Place: Shane Crain, Elle Coldiron and Alex Stanley, Lexington Christian Academy “Winter Wonderland”

Second Place: John Kevin Williams, Maggie Schmidt, Kelly Moore, and Sara Beth Barnett, Lexington Christian Academy “ Christmas Castle”

Amateur

First Place: Barbara Leadingham Hanson, Jean Isaacs Bramlette and Forest Isaacs “ Bab’s Bakery”

Second Place: The Grady Family “Welcome Santa”

Professional First: Place Janet Brown “ Grandpa’s Antique Toy Shoppe”

People’s Choice Award: The Everett Family “Munchkinland”

Event sponsors were:

The Lexington Downtown Hotel & Conference Center, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky, WKYT27 and The CWKYT, Gooch Auction Group, WVLK News Talk 590 and Kentucky Utilities.