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CALM's Adopt-a-Family Campaign Helps 135 Families in Need This Year

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By Lori Goodman for CALM



The Child Abuse Listening & Mediation (CALM) Adopt-a-Family program received 135 requests from families for assistance this year, up from just 50 families in 2010. (CALM photo)

Businesses, schools and others in the community team up with the Santa Barbara nonprofit to fulfill requests

What does a family in crisis need for the holidays? Everything from blankets and warm clothes to toys, books and games. More than anything, families in crisis need to know that someone cares about them.

To alleviate the stress of the holidays, [Child Abuse Listening & Mediation \(CALM\)](#) officially launched the Adopt-a-Family campaign via [Facebook](#) in 2010, and has seen it grow leaps and bounds in a single year. CALM received 135 requests from families for assistance this year, up from just 50 families in 2010.

During December, the CALM offices in Santa Barbara have been filling up with gifts for families in need. CALM reached out to the community to support its efforts in fulfilling the wishes of the clients and their families. Each donor received a story about his or her "family" along with a wish list of needs, such as shoes or hygiene products, and dreams, usually as simple as a toy, book or art supply.



The CALM Auxiliary raised more than \$1,000 to adopt five of the CALM families.

"One of the families adopted is a father with two sons who live in transition housing," said Ashlyn Clark, CALM's Adopt-a-Family coordinator. "We provided them with a complete set of clothing for each family member. Everybody needed shoes. We were also able to get a skateboard and helmet for the teenage son."

Another family served by the Auxiliary is from Santa Maria, where the need is greatest. This family is in danger of losing their home.

"They needed toothbrushes and a pair of work boots for the father," Clark said.

The kindergarten class at Marymount of Santa Barbara also adopted one of CALM's families in need. Each child in that kindergarten class presented a gift to CALM staff, who then delivered the gifts to the family. Because of the generosity and caring of the 15 children in the kindergarten class, four foster children in Santa Maria not only will receive socks and Legos, but more importantly a joyful holiday and the knowledge that the community cares for them.

Last year, CALM received a thank you note from one little boy that said, "Thanks for caring about a kid you don't even know."

CALM launched its Adopt-a-Family program because many of CALM's therapists reported how much families were struggling during the holidays. As word got out in 2011, the requests grew. Donors came from every walk of life in Santa Barbara. Book clubs, mah jong groups, businesses such as Deckers Outdoor Corporation, Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, Community West Bank, Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, Underground Energy, The Spine & Ortho Center and many individuals and friends came together to adopt families and to make this holiday a happy one for the CALM families of Santa Barbara County.

CALM was founded in 1970 to reach stressed parents before they hurt their children. CALM continues to be the only nonprofit agency in Santa Barbara County focusing solely on preventing, assessing, and treating child abuse and family violence through comprehensive, cutting-edge programs. CALM offers children, families and adults a safe, nonjudgmental, caring and strength-based environment to heal and

increase family well-being. For more information about all of CALM's services, [click here](#) or call 805.965.2376.

— *Lori Goodman is the development director for [Child Abuse Listening & Mediation \(CALM\)](#).*

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