

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU

FOR BRINGING THE HOLIDAYS TO
THOSE WHO MAY NOT HAVE HAD
THEM WITHOUT YOUR HELP
Angels Bearing Gifts Staff

Mary met Evelynnn at a support group for parents of special needs children that Evelynnn, a licensed therapist, was facilitating and is grateful that Evelynnn founded "her Angels group" as it is "clearly one that is needed in the community." Angels Bearing Gifts serves beneficiaries from Carpinteria to Paso Robles.

In her wallet, Mary keeps a Chinese proverb which concludes with the line "If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody." (Volunteers seem to instinctively know this.)

"If You Want Happiness for a Lifetime, Help Somebody"

by Jill Davis, Angels Bearing Gifts

Volunteers—what would we do without them? Not nearly as much as we can do with them. One passionate volunteer is worth more than a dozen clock-watchers someone once said. This may have been the same person who said if you want something done give it to a busy person.

Mary Watts and Holly Sherwin, two working moms in Santa Barbara, for whom a 24-hour day surely can't be enough, are living examples of this viewpoint. Interestingly enough, working mothers with school-age children volunteer more hours than any other demographic in America according to U.S News & World Report.

"I have done it all my life. It was instilled in me by my parents and in my husband from his parents," says Mary. "So it is sort of second nature to us."



Mary with her son Ben

lessons that volunteering conveys. Mary's son, Ben, and Holly's son, Alec, have special needs (as does Angels founder Evelynnn Smith's daughter, Michelle) so it is a match that works well on several levels.

"It was an eye-opening experience for Alec," says Holly. "A bit scary at first, but I think he got it. We were able to have a great discussion about the importance of helping our fellow human beings." And she adds: "Volunteering as a family made the experience so much richer."



Holly and Lanny with their son Alec

"I don't always live up to it the best that I can," says Mary, "but it is something I usually strive for."

Volunteering as a family and, at this time of year, as a family holiday tradition, is what feels right to so many in our community. It's giving back. It's making a difference. It's an "active lesson" in compassion for children.

"As Alec gets older, I hope the extent of our volunteering grows and through it, we also will continue to grow as a family and a community," says Holly.

Both the Sherwin and Watts families are hands-on volunteers for Angels Bearing Gifts, wrapping and delivering holiday gifts to individuals with developmental disabilities who don't have families. They also sponsor beneficiaries through financial contributions, ensuring that they are remembered on their birthdays, Valentine's Day as well as Chanukah and Christmas.

Volunteers, we need you. We can't do much without you, and we appreciate everything you do.

And if you want to know more about Angels Bearing Gifts and the ways you can help developmentally disabled people without families celebrate the holidays, please call 884.7222 or email info@angelsbearinggifts.com. It's never too late to volunteer!