



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Inmates, Corrections staff help make holiday brighter for youth

Pierre, S.D. – When Principal Bev Myer realized that forty of her students at the Marty Indian School would not be receiving any Christmas gifts this year, she turned to others for assistance.

The South Dakota Department of Corrections answered her call for help.

"The staff and inmates were happy to take part in such a worthwhile project," said Interim Corrections Secretary Doug Weber. "We hope the gifts make for a brighter holiday season for these young people."

State prison inmates and Department of Corrections staff made or donated more than 150 toys, board games, jewelry, clothing, music, jewelry boxes, makeup, dream catchers and Native American beadwork for ten high school aged females, ten high school aged males, ten grade school aged girls and ten grade school aged males.

"The response was exceptional," said Myer. "It's nice to see how the corrections system is able to give back to young people in need."

Bob Dooley, Warden at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, coordinated the department's effort to help the youth.

"Some inmates designed and created elaborate jewelry and beadwork items," said Dooley. "Others built wooden toys from scrap wood, anything they could do to help out the kids."

Other gifts were sent to Springfield from the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls and the Women's Prison in Pierre. Corrections staff in Springfield then wrapped the gifts in advance of delivering the gifts to the school in Marty December 17th. The students are scheduled to receive the gifts on December 22nd.

The student council at the school also organized a food drive and dance to assist the families and provide them a holiday meal.

In addition to the Marty school donations, the 'Pedal Power from the Pen' program at the Durfee State Prison is also donating bicycles to youth in the Yankton area. Twenty refurbished bicycles will be given to the Yankton Police Department for distribution to kids in that area who don't

have or can't afford a bicycle of their own. Another 25 to 30 bicycles are being donated to the KVHT 'Trees for Families' project.

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Gifts for Marty Indian School students were wrapped at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield.



Examples of the wooden toys and game boards made by inmates.



Examples of the jewelry and beadwork made by inmates.



A doll house made for Marty Indian School students.



Examples of items made by inmates and staff.



Left to right: Bev Myer, Marty Indian School High School Principal, Sandy Weschler, MDSP, Sheri Ludens, MDSP, Mary Ann Kloucek, MDSP, Santa and Russ Leonard, Marty Indian School Elementary Principal.