

## Huntington Beach Girl Scouts bring holiday joy through Operation Waymakers



Youngsters in Girl Scout Troup 7370 Kaitlyn Eun, Morgan Gibbons and Ann Nguyen, from left, fill gift boxes during Operation Waymakers on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

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Many in Orange County may have more wants than needs, but Girl Scouts in one Huntington Beach troop are learning that's not always the case.

The girls of Troop 7370 gathered Tuesday afternoon at Huntington Beach Church to construct 100 gift boxes, headed to children at the nearby [Waymakers Huntington Beach Youth Shelter](#).

Each girl in the 23-member troop wore a Santa Claus hat as she assembled the gifts, with girls from other troops also helping out during Operation Waymakers.



Girls in Girl Scout Troop 1253 fill gift boxes during Operation Waymakers in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The boxes featured four “need” items — essentials like toiletries, socks and soaps — and two “want” items, including stuffed animals, nail polish and sunglasses.

“We do have badges in [Girl Scouts](#) that teach wants versus needs,” Troop 7370 co-leader Nicole Gaylord said. “This has taught the girls to go to a store and say, ‘Do I want this or do I need this?’”

Kaitlyn Eun, 9, is a fourth-grader at Smith Elementary School in Huntington Beach. She had fun as she assembled the boxes with her friends. The girls also designed cards to be placed inside.

“I feel really happy that we get to contribute back to our community,” Kaitlyn said. “There are people that need stuff that we have a lot of, and we can spare some of that stuff to them. I bet it’ll make a lot of kids happy this Christmas.”



Members of Girl Scout Troop 7370 fold gift boxes during Operation Waymakers in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

This is the third straight year that Troop 7370 has participated in Operation Waymakers, Gaylord said. The multi-level troop, which includes girls from kindergarten to 17 years old, previously made gift boxes to be shipped worldwide via Operation Christmas Child.

But the troop, which already participates in the Waymakers [Light a Light of Love holiday parade](#) each December, wanted something that would benefit kids living a little bit closer to home.

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The boxes were set to be delivered to the Waymakers shelter by another co-leader of the troop, Jordan Young.



Girl Scouts write Christmas cards to be put in gift boxes during Operation Waymakers in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Devon Noonan, a fifth-grade student at Moffett Elementary School, has been in Troop 7370 for a few months but had participated in Operation Waymakers before.

“It makes me happy to pack the boxes and give back to the community and kids that are less fortunate,” said Devon, 10. “This might be the only Christmas presents that they get, so it makes me happy that we get to give back to them. It’s important that they just are happy this holiday season.”

Waymakers Huntington Beach Youth Shelter program director Nancy Galeana said the gift boxes will be distributed to children at the shelter, their parents and even children in the Oak View community of Huntington Beach through a partnership.



A Girl Scout draws on a gift box during the Operation Waymakers project to benefit the Huntington Beach youth shelter on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

“I always say that it’s kids helping kids,” Galeana said. “That has been one of the mottos that we follow.”

Gaylord said all of the girls in the troop look forward to Operation Waymakers each year, as one of several community service projects throughout the year. To raise money for the project, they took orders from their families and friends for chocolates, nuts, magazine subscriptions and other items, earning \$300 for their efforts. They also welcomed the receipt of gift items and additional money from other troops and Girl Scout families for the purchase of the gift boxes, presents and cards.

“Granted, they love to take cookie money and go on trips, too,” Gaylord added with a laugh.



A Girl Scout from Troop 7370 lines up her "Neds" knit hat collection during Operation Waymakers in Huntington Beach on Tuesday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)