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PRESS RELEASE

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Photos: Courtesy of Community Outreach Ministry

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Nonprofit Groups Bring Christmas Cheer to At-Risk Youth

By Lynn K. Loyd

Two nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping at-risk youth worked together to create a heartfelt Christmas celebration on December 12 where children and families enjoyed the festivities held at the Wildomar Elks Lodge #2951. Prison Fellowship and Community Outreach Ministry hosted the 21st annual Angel Tree Christmas event featuring gifts and Christmas dinner. Prison Fellowship is a national Christian nonprofit group that serves prisoners, former inmates, and their families. Prison Fellowship mobilizes local churches and organizations with the goal of delivering a Christmas gift, a Gospel message and “a personal message of love on behalf of their mom or dad behind bars.” According to President and CEO of Prison Fellowship James

Ackerman there is 2.7 million children in the country who have either a mother or father in prison; a staggering number that represents one in every 28 American children. Angel Tree A Program of Prison Fellowship was started in 1982 and over the decades more than ten million gifts have been given to these children by volunteers across America on behalf of their incarcerated parents.

Guests enjoyed a catered boxed lunch by The Habit Burger Grill, and the Director of Catering Trucks, Doug Siewert said, “Giving back to our community is part of our culture. We’re honored to be part of this holiday event and give back to our local community in Wildomar.” Both volunteers and representatives from local organizations such as the U.S. Forestry Service, Kevin Ferris and team of firefighters, and Smokey Bear gave tours of the fire truck and did fire safety and prevention demonstrations. Tom Chitwood of Camp Agape informed caregivers about summer camp scholarships for Angel Tree children to have a life changing experience. Melissa Vega of Vista Community Clinic provided caregivers with educational materials about quality health care for children and families. These organizations provided the children a venue to interact with positive role models.

Dr. Mona Salomo-Davies and her husband Bob are co-founders of Community Outreach Ministry a volunteer operated non-profit organization that is giving at-risk kids a second chance to have purpose, destiny, and a prosperous future. The ministry thrives on empowering kids to possess a winning attitude and a champion spirit through our year-round programs.

The Christmas party provides an opportunity to stay connected year-round through outreach, camping, and mentoring by introducing the “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration” Model and Mentor Protégé Workshops with *Caregiver Resource List* - Comprehensive community support services and providers. *Children Resource List* - Afterschool enrichment

programs, behavioral health parent partners, mentoring programs, and Youth Opportunity Centers to develop employability skills, hands-on training, and certifications. *Incarcerated Parent Resource List* - Re-Entry programs for returning citizens, Work Force Development for worker readiness and technology skills, and training. Counseling, parenting skills, and rehabilitation.

Coach Bob Davies a retired engineer shares his previous work experience in Aerospace traveling all over the world, and our mentoring team, mentor's youngsters in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, "Gearing Up for STEM" Mentor Protégé Workshops is for ages eight to 18. The workshops introduce mentees to basic assembly of building robots in small groups with their peers, and mentors to improve literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving techniques, and teaming skills. And demonstrates real-world experience, using real-world tools-of-the-trade. Mentees learn about endless job possibilities in STEM and vocational career pathways to support themselves. Promotes high school graduation and beyond, intervention, and diversion from juvenile delinquency and reduce recidivism.

Thank you to our partners, donors, volunteers, and sponsors for presents and swag bags full of goodies-free of charge to the thirty plus registered Angel Tree families who participated at the party. And for giving hope to the children to know they are loved by their community, and faith for a brighter future. We are especially appreciative of our assistant Angel Tree Coordinators Janice Hare who contacts the Angel Tree families and invites the children to events. Johanna Hose who writes the Angel Tree tags, and Ankoma Hose who passes out the Christmas presents. We are grateful to our board members Yolanda Burgess, Denise Ronzello, Marilyn Brown, and Norma Brunette for their year-round perseverance for making this event a wonderful success.

For more information about Community Outreach Ministry, call 951-698-7650 or visit our website www.communityoutreachministry.org. To donate towards on-going workshops, text DONATE CHAMPIONS to 609-212-0627. Checks are made payable to Community Outreach Ministry and mailed to 23905 Clinton Keith Road Suite 114 #116, Wildomar, California 92595. We can also be contacted by email at: info@communityoutreachministry.org