Sneaux Day, Toys for Tots gives back to community

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With the holiday season soon approaching, students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are lending a helping hand with Toys for Tots at this year’s Sneaux Day, while also giving back to those in need.

Anna Paddock, Student Government Association vice president, along with UL Lafayette’s Veterans Services, helped put on the event.

“We’re partnering with UL Veteran Services and they’re bringing a large collection of boxes to the event,” Paddock said.

Sneaux Day, which is set to be held Nov. 28 outside of Girard Hall, is something Paddock said she wanted to continue from last year.

“It’s just really easy at this time of year to get caught up in the hustle and bustle in the holidays and to forget the less fortunate in our communities,” Paddock said. “So it’s important to keep those people in mind and really concentrate in giving back to others during the holidays.”

According to Dominic Hebert, president of the Veterans Services organization, Sneaux Day is used for parents and kids to enjoy a day at UL Lafayette, with games, prizes and live music.

“They put ‘snow’ on the ground for the kids, and it’s just a fun day,” Hebert said.

Veterans Services which, according to Herbert, serves veterans in the military, aims to provide resources and support to others who have served and help with their transition into higher education.

“On Sneaux Day, we’ve put out two boxes with partnership with Toys for Tots and SGA and we’re trying to collect toys,” Hebert said. “It’s a day for students and a great program that provided for families in unfortunate circumstances.”

Hebert, who is a Marine veteran, said Toys for Tots is special for him, giving his military branch, as well as former Marine Ted Silvester, vice president for marketing and development for Toys for Tots.

Silvester said Marines have been involved in delivering the joy and magic of Christmas to those who are less fortunate children since 1947.

“It was shortly right after when World War II had ended and a number of children were orphaned,” Silvester said.

Lt. Col. Bill Hendricks, with the help of his wife Diane, handknitted a few dolls and asked her husband to find an organization to distribute those in need, according to Silvester.

Silvester added when Hendricks and his wife couldn’t find an organization, they created Toys for Tots.

“This is our 71st year and we have about 800 local Toys for Tots campaigns in all major markets,” Silvester said. “We have Marines and volunteers that engage with our communities.”

Silvester said there is a sense to work with those communities and their families to raise toys for children in need.

“There are a lot of folks that are down in their luck and I couldn’t imagine as a child coming down on Christmas morning and not seeing anything under the tree — it’s just devastating,” Silvester said. “It really makes a big difference and it really helps in the development of our future patriotic members of our community.”

Silvester said Toys for Tots, which is a seasonal charity event put on by marines and volunteers who are engaged with their communities from October to December, distributed 18 million toys to seven million children.

Hebert said because of Lafayette Marine Corps and Toys for Tots, kids can have a memorable Christmas like he did when he was young.

“I remember waking up on Christmas morning excited for Christmas morning and Toys for Tots just provide that,” Hebert said.

Silvester said if you are someone you would like to donate to Toys for Tots, visit their website at https://www.toysfortots.org/donate/forms/simple/Default.aspx.