

Local couple continues gift-giving tradition

By Carrie Napoleon

For Nina and Kenneth J. Allen, the decision six years ago to begin buying holiday presents for local children in need was not difficult to make.

"It's easy, of course, to give to the United Way and organized charities, which we do," Kenneth J. Allen, head of Kenneth J. Allen & Associates Injury Attorneys in Valparaiso and Merrillville, said. But when you think about it, he continued, far less than 100 percent of the donation goes to those who need it.

By buying presents themselves, all of the Allens' money – this year \$10,000 – can directly benefit children and teens who may not otherwise have gifts to open this holiday season.

"We all deserve some joy in our lives," Allen said. He credits his wife, Nina, as the driving force behind the holiday gift giveaway. Each year, he explains, she would do all the shopping and buy specific gifts for the children, and then wrap them all with help from family and friends and volunteers from his law firm.

This year, the Allens are doing things a little differently. They are utilizing a number of local charitable organizations to aid in distributing gifts to those in need. Included is The Caring Place in Valparaiso, St. Jude House in Crown Point, Rainbow Shelter in Gary, Stepping Stone in Michigan City and Greater Hammond Community Services.

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