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Early Risers Kiwanis Club President Christy Kirk displays some of the coats that have been given to children free of charge in the last couple of weeks, just in time for the current cold spell entering the area. Courtesy photo

Early Risers Kiwanis Club teams with Liberal Soroptimist Club again this year to distribute winter coats to children

- L&T staff report

The Liberal Early Risers Kiwanis Club has been busy over the past couple of weeks distributing winter coats to children in need via the “Coats for Kids” project.

Early Risers Kiwanis members partnered with the Liberal Soroptimist Club again this year to distribute winter coats, stocking caps and gloves to children in the community. The Kiwanis provided winter coats and the Soroptimist Club provided matching caps and gloves.

More than 250 coats, caps and gloves have been given free of charge to children in need, just in time for cold winter temperatures.

The "Coats for Kids" project is a longtime annual project for the Early Risers Kiwanis and has provided literally thousands of coats locally to those in need over the years. The bulk of the funding comes from the annual "Peach Sale" conducted in late summer or early fall depending on the peach crop. This year due to a difficult growing season in Colorado, peach committee chairman Lynn Schmitt secured a load of fresh-from-the-tree Georgia peaches. The peaches were delivered to Liberal by National Carriers and sold on the parking lot of Jerry Harding's State Farm Insurance.

"The Early Risers Kiwanis would certainly like to thank National Carriers and Jerry Harding for their valuable contribution to a successful fund raising event," said Early Risers Kiwanis Club President Christy Kirk. "And also thank you for the generous community support of the peach sale enabling the sale of nearly 500 cases of peaches in a single day."

However, a project on the scale of the "Coats for Kids" program could not be sustained without generous individual contributions as well. This year, several businesses and entities contributed to the "Coats for Kids" project. They are:

- Panhandle Eastern Pipeline Company

- National Beef Packing Company

- First National Bank

- Sunflower Bank

- Community Bank

- Conestoga Energy

- Southwest Medical Center

- Hay-Rice & Associates

- Liberal Harley Davidson and the Harley Owners Group (H.O.G. Chapter)

“The Early Risers Kiwanis Club would like to publicly say ‘Thank You!’ to these donors for their generous support,” Kirk said.

The “Coats for Kids” committee was headed this year by club member Ed Poley. And a thank you goes out to USD 480 Director of Human Resources and Public Relations Jason McAfee for his assistance with the program in the school system. And finally it takes many people to purchase, sort and distribute the coats.

“Thank you to all involved in making the ‘Coats for Kids’ project a success again this year,” Kirk added.

The Early Risers Kiwanis Club is a service club oriented to serving the children of the community through various projects.

“If you are interested in becoming a member, meetings are every Thursday morning at 6:30 at the Pancake House Restaurant,” Kirk said. “We would like to invite prospective members to attend and see what Early Risers Kiwanis is all about.”

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