

NEWS

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Giving Parents Holiday Season Shopping Time

Northeast Ohio-based non-profit group takes care of children with special needs so that mom and dad can take care of their Holiday shopping needs

November 29, 2006 -- Parents who need to make a special visit to Santa Claus during the holiday season hire the neighborhood babysitter to watch the kids. But for parents who have children with special needs such as autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and other disabilities, it's a different story.

For these parents, it's extraordinarily difficult --- if not virtually impossible --- to find a caregiver to supervise and interact with children who have a moderate or severe physical or mental disability.

That's why Sister Lois Buck, a certified special needs educator and childcare provider of Euclid, founded the Cardinal's Nest. It's a non-profit group that provides respite service called **Parents' Time Away While The Kids Play**. Parents drop off their children at a center where Sister Lois and volunteers supervise and do fun activities with the kids for a few hours.

"I started the Cardinal's Nest because I saw many parents who have a special needs' child can't do what parents do from time to time because they can't find an appropriate caregiver," explains Sister Lois, a 25-year Ursuline nun. "Parents Time Away simply allows parents some much-needed respite ----- to see a movie, go to a nice dinner, visit friends, or during this time of year, deliver their children's gift list to St. Nick."

More than a year ago, Sister Lois and volunteers developed and organized Parents' Time Away, which is held four times a year. The first Parents' Time Away was held in August 2004, and drew more than 10 special needs children.

This Saturday, Dec. 2, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., the Parents' Time Away event will be held at Julie Billiard School, 4982 Clubside Road, in Lyndhurst. The children will participate in art, music, reading and sports activities. Saturday's event also will feature a miniature railroad display by Robert and Dorothy Tarr of Trains At Your Place Inc. in Willoughby.

Note To Assignment Editors: We invite your reporter and/or photographer to cover this Parents' Time Away event on Saturday, Dec. 2, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Sister Lois Buck and volunteers will be available for interviews. If you require additional information, or need special accommodations, please call Sister Lois at 216.780.2054, or e-mail her at loisbuck@adelphia.net. Thank you for all of your time and consideration.