



SELF  
STORAGE  
ASSOCIATION

VOL. 5, NO. 12

# GLOBE

DECEMBER 2006

ISSUE \$4.95 / ANNUAL \$50

**Ski Workshop**  
Register by 12/22/06 (see p. 35)

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE SELF STORAGE INDUSTRY



**An Industry Made Up  
Of People First**



# An Industry That Cares

*First and Foremost, Self Storage is Made Up of People*

By Tom Comi

When Lisa Lisk's son Jagger was born three months premature right after the 9/11 attacks, it opened her eyes to what is really important in the world. Five years later, it is a healthy Jagger who still serves as her inspiration to help those in need during the holiday season.

Lisk, the property manager of ULock Self Storage in Concord, North Carolina, said her company, Watson and Taylor Management, donates its moving truck to Samaritan Purse, an organization that collects donated gifts for the less fortunate children in other countries under the name Operation Christmas Child.

"My own child was born three months premature, so I know my family is very lucky to have my son here with us today," she said. "Each day with Jagger is truly a blessing. By donating the use of our truck to help Samaritan's Purse, I know I am bringing happiness to other children that are less fortunate. Nothing is greater than the sunshine beaming from a child's happy face. I have a particularly soft spot in my heart for children."

While everybody has their own reasons for donating to charities during the holiday season, it's the efforts of those

like Lisk and her company that make the self storage industry special (as evidenced by over 70 responses we received to an e-mail the SSA sent out for this article).

Tracy Taylor, president of Watson & Taylor Management Company in Dallas, said he encourages the managers of his 32 properties located throughout Texas, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina to get involved with charities throughout the year.

"We talk to all of our local managers about donating space to charities in their area, especially around the holidays," he said. "It not only allows us to help those less fortunate, but it gives us an opportunity to get to know the people in the communities in which we do business."

## Winter Wonderland

Diana Marler, owner of Calaveras Mini Storage in the Sierra foothills of Calaveras County, California, said her company is approached by many organizations throughout the year. The tough part, she admitted, is deciding which groups to help.

"CMS has long-established relationships with local organizations," she said. "We have offered storage space to the Arts Council, school district and Santa's Express, because they do good for the people in our county. Storage space for food drives are at a premium around our area, and Toys for Tots helps make Christmas a joyful time for children who otherwise may not receive presents."

Marler believes that it is the responsibility of the storage industry to do what it can to help when it can.

"We are a business of service, and many people can use help, especially around the holidays," she said. "Generally this is a time for goodwill. As a whole, this kind of gesture can relieve the financial burdens of those families in need."

Jim Flore is the director of operations for the Richmond, Virginia, branch of SMARTBOX Portable Self Storage, LLC, which has 10 locations in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Louisiana. He and his company give new meaning to spreading the wealth.

"We support numerous charitable organizations by providing collection resources for various non-profit organizations to make it easier to collect, store and move food, clothes and other items for those in need," he said.

Here are some of those groups and SMARTBOX's role:

- **Richmond Sgt Santa:** Flore said this organization collects and distributes new and used items for needy families in the Richmond, Virginia, area.

- **The Salvation Army Holiday Angel Program:** SMARTBOX supports Angel Tree by providing portable storage units for the collection, storage and transportation of items they receive at their various mall locations.
- **Local Radio and TV promotions:** SMARTBOX worked with a Richmond, Virginia, radio station (MIX 103.7) in November to raise donations for the needy. Flore said the company also partnered with a local Fox TV affiliate on a promotion for people to fill Christmas stockings for needy children.
- **Toys for Tots:** The company's Virginia Beach franchise works with the local Marines to support Toys for Tots by providing SMARTBOX Portable Storage Units for their collections sites.
- **Local Church Organizations:** Flore said several of their locations, including the Charlotte franchise, are working with local churches to support their clothing drives for the underprivileged with SMARTBOX Portable Storage Units.

"Our entire team gets great personal satisfaction knowing we are supporting the local communities where we are operating," Flore said. "In the portable storage business we frequently see families that are in great need of help and we frequently deal with sad situations revolving around families that have been put out, but don't want to lose their personal belongings."

*See An Industry That Cares, page 20*



*John and Linda Lord of Burke Lake Self Storage eagerly accept Toys for Tots.*

### It's Better To Give...

John Long, who runs Burke Lake Storage in Virginia with his wife Linda, said helping others was ingrained in him at a very young age. He recalls the time in 1990 that he and his colleagues at the Moose Lodge in Michigan were able to help a family in need.

"We heard about a family in the area that needed a roof they couldn't afford," he said. "The health department was going to condemn the house if the roof was not fixed. We got together with some fundraisers and gathered the materials and the help on a Saturday morning and put the roof on for them. It got me hooked on helping others when we saw the expressions on the family's faces. It's something I will never forget."

Apparently not. Some 16 years later, Long and his wife are still doing all they can to give back to the community by making their facility available as a drop-off area throughout the year so nearby citizens can donate their supplies to worthy causes.

In addition to doing Toys for Tots around the holidays, Burke Lake Storage has donated space to local churches, the Caring and Sharing Outreach Ministry for the homeless and needy, the Boy Scouts, and a local youth football team.

"We let our customers know we have a unit set aside for the needy," John Long said. "Any useable item is acceptable. It gives our customers the satisfaction of giving items they no longer need that will go to someone who does. We have had customers actually go out of their way to buy a new item just to donate for the needy. It gives them and us a warm feeling."

Burke Lake Storage collects almost anything that people are willing to donate, including clothing, furnishings, canned food and personal items.

"Just knowing someone is getting things that we take for granted everyday is a wonderful feeling," he said.

Wilmer and Shirley Shank can certainly relate to that sentiment. They own Beaver Creek Mini Storage in Hagerstown, Maryland, and they were approached several years ago by a friend about donating space for Toys for Tots. What began as the donation of a small unit has now grown, many years later, to the donation of two 10' x 15' units.

"This is something that we can do to help others that are less fortunate than we are," said Shirley, who also offers her time to the Salvation Army and Samaritan's Purse. "I enjoy helping people, but especially children. They appreciate whatever you do for them, and it makes me feel like the work I do helps others. To me, that makes life worth living when you think of others instead of yourself, particularly at this time of the year." ❖

## The Best Advice I Ever Got...

*The best advise I received was from executive leadership coach, Tim O'Brien, who said "take your time to build authentic long term relationships and your customers will become friends."*

Jim Davies  
Buchanan Storage Capital

