

WFWP Chicago's Christmas Service Project at the Rainbow Push Coalition

Fannie Smith
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WFWP Chicago Christmas Comm Project with Bonita Parker Chief Operations Officer at Rainbow Push and Fannie

WFWP Chicago Chapter had an opportunity to host a community service project event on December 16, 2017, at the historical Rainbow PUSH Coalition (RPC), founded by Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. Like many across the country, the year of 2017 was challenging in so many ways; however; the leaders of the Chicago chapter were determined to serve and help those less fortunate and whom are deserving to be acknowledged and appreciated in a community where many are forgotten, especially our youth.

The Rainbow PUSH for Excellence (PUSH Excel) was chosen because of the programs offered to children from low income neighborhoods. They offer the Oratorical Program, where children demonstrate their amazing mental acuity in memorizing some of the world's most profound speeches from historic and current leaders, and the art of public speaking, poise, and character building. The STEAM Program (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) is designed to empower students with the proper use of technical coding, robotics, and development of apps and games in a way that helps them improve math and science grades. It is amazing to see very small children absorb apps and resolve technical challenges. These programs are offered on Saturdays at the PUSH headquarters using donated computers.

Leaning on purpose and prayer, we hustled to inform WFWP members and friends about the project, asking to support us with toys, clothing, toiletries, and helpful items in this effort. As a result, the Chicago Family Church, which is in the north side of Chicago, was gracious enough to donate, in a coordinated effort by Patricia Fliginger and Kathryn Davis. Also, on Friday December 15th, WFWP members and friends representing the South side of Chicago were also asked to bring items to PUSH, coordinated by Fannie Smith. Regardless of little advance notice, we were blessed with monetary donations from both sites which enabled us to purchase many toys, games, hats, gloves, notions, and more as gifts.



Rainbow PUSH STEAM Science Technology Engineering Art and Math students with instructor Pamela Persons

We were prepared to surprise the two PUSH programs (of approximately 80 people) after the STEAM class was dismissed and during the winter Oratorical Competition, in the beautiful chapel located in the lobby of the RPC headquarters building. Students and parents who entered the chapel were very surprised and excited to see all the gifts and decorations displayed on tables, with the alter of pictures of Reverend Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., Reverend Clay Evans and Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. serving as the backdrop.

As part of the gift giving session, Pamela Persons, their instructor, guided them when asked how the programs helped them as young people. The oratorical theme, “The Spirit Within Us,” was quite evident as Reverend Jesse Jackson was very happy to see the chapel decorated and filled with so many items that were donated by Chicago WFWP for the benefit of the students and parents during the holiday season.

Our sincere appreciation to the employees at PUSH for donations and cooperation to make our community service project a great success: Reverend Jeanette Wilson, Judge Stanley Hill, Michelle Chambers, Jason Robinson, and Bonita Parker. To Ellen Dickey, Chinta Strasberg, Kent Hunley, and Sandra Mc Kinney, you are angels.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the following people were not featured in photos: Patricia Fliginger, Kathryn Davis, and Fannie’s daughter, Penny Smith (who also provided much help and support to her mom).