

Santa Claus and his white beard

It was Christmas day, and even though the real meaning of Christmas has faded away somewhat due to the culture of commercialism these days, its meaning was kept alive for 600 kids in [orphanages and] hospitals.

There was neither Rudolph the Red-Nosed reindeer nor a nice sleigh, but there was definitely a miracle made by the efforts of many people. This miracle was initiated by the Jeju Furey Foundation, founded by foreigners residing in Jeju.

It started small. They started to care about neighbors who were struggling while living in Jeju. Of course they knew it was hard to help others when they were living far away from home but they had a strong belief, which was that they can make it happen when they work together. Now they are one community.

Jeju Furey is a foundation but anybody can get involved in it no matter if they are members of it or not. There is a lot of work that is done but surprisingly this work is all done voluntarily.

Christmas Orphanage Drive 3 is one such effort. The foundation put up an announcement a month ago for this event and they got a wish list for children at hospitals and orphanages. Special to this year, the Jeju Free International City Development Center donated generous amounts money which resulted in more delightful gifts for children.

On the 22nd [of December], people gathered through SNS and wrapped up the gifts and on the 24th, they picked who would be Santa Claus. On Christmas day, people volunteered to hold parties in the morning [at the orphanages]. The more you spread happiness, the happier you are. This event was supposed to be for kids of orphanages but it expanded this year. The foundation was able reach 4 orphanages and 7 hospitals, resulting in 616 kids receiving Christmas gifts. Also, where there were 10 Santas last year, this year, there were 30!

"It is not [just] about helping others, but [about] sharing" said Mary Rogers (*sic*), "I can truly feel that I am living in Jeju through this charity work."