

PHOTOS



Dave Lavender/The Herald-Dispatch
Shalah Nicholas, 10, of Huntington, Ariel Markham, 10, of Huntington and Dazha Congleton, 9, of Huntington, all pose at Everyday Skate Shop in Huntington with their new skateboards donated to them by the CreateAskate program...

Santa comes in the form of skateboarding

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By DAVE LAVENDER
The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- John Brown only took a few steps outside of Everyday Skate Shop when he stopped, popped a smile, and said he couldn't hold it in any longer.

"Here hold this," he said handing a T-shirt to Kris Hillen and putting his new skateboard on the sidewalk. "I'm going to do an ollie."

The 10-year-old Brown -- who did nail the skateboarding trick -- was just one of a couple dozen kids that Hillen brought over from the Fairfield East Community Center to Everyday Skate Shop on Friday for a little Christmas surprise.

On Friday, Santa got a little help from his skater friends, as Huntington native Bryan Ridgeway, a longtime skateboard industry professional living in California, teamed up with Hillen, the Skate Shop and a host of famous skateboarding friends, to drop a sleigh-load of free skateboards and gear (more than \$6,000 worth) on the pre-teens and teens.

For Ridgeway, who has an innovative new nationwide school program, CreateAskate with Paul Schmidt (considered by many to be the "Godfather" of modern-day skateboard deck manufacturing), it's been all about letting his hometown in on the joy of skateboarding and learning.

In August, Ridgeway introduced kids at the community center to the CreateAskate program in which junior high and high school kids create their own personal skateboard deck and learn how making a skateboard has applications for mathematics, science, language skills, design and engineering opportunities, all wrapped into a cooperative learning experience.

"Do y'all remember summer time and what did y'all do?" said Ridgeway, who has introduced the weeklong program at schools around the country.

"We scratched the skateboards to make them smooth," Brown said.

"That's right and what did I say I would do? Well, I made some skateboards for you," Ridgeway said as the kids erupted and jockeyed for position in line to get the skateboards and T-shirts.

CreateAskate donated the decks, and Hillen, Ridgeway and Everyday Skate Shop teamed up to make sure all the kids got a skateboard, and CreateAskate certificate that was handed out by Ray Ridgeway, Bryan's dad.

Using Ridgeway's industry contacts and various friendships, Ridgeway gathered up products from the top people in skateboarding such as Tony Hawk (donated videos and skate products) as well as Chris Carter (formerly of Barboursville) now living in Dayton, and currently owns one of the top skateboard brands in the world (Alien Workshop).

Blair Burns, 23, and Cuong Phan, 22, of Everyday Skate Shop, donated their time to put all the trucks and wheels on the decks in an afternoon.

"We donated all the labor for the kids," Phan said. "It's just for the kids and to help keep them out of trouble."

Kristy Woods of Milton came with her son Caleb Shafer and several others from Milton including Josh Gibson.

Woods said she was overwhelmed with the generosity.

"I think it's great and really good for the kids," Woods said. "We don't have everything but there was a lot of kids that got a skateboard in there that probably have less than we do. It's just great this happened at Christmas time."

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anon-oati5h Absolutely wonderful guys. The kids in this area need more "men" like you. Thank you.