Experiences warm the heart

Shopping with children is always an experience, one that Hillsdale Kiwanis Club members do annually as part of their Christmas party for Head Start students.

It’s one of the club’s biggest events, exemplifying their commitment to children by taking them shopping for family members at Walmart, then treating them to a party where they meet Santa and munch on homemade cookies. They receive some presents of their own at the party, as well as some one-on-one attention from club members and volunteers.

I like to volunteer since I love kids and get a kick out of the things they say and do. I’ve been fortunate to have sweet little angels who crack me up with their facial expressions and matter-of-fact comments.

Even with my absent-mindedness of thinking I lost my camera bag in Walmart, the event was one I wouldn’t trade. Always on the first Saturday in December, one of the busiest Saturdays of the month, I wonder how I will fit it in, but it always turns out to be a positive experience that warms the heart.

Fellow club members with active children to keep an eye on were more than helpful when assisting to find the camera bag, when it was on the bus the whole time. I think our minds find more to worry about when schedules are tight and there’s more to get done. The key is to remain calm and laugh at life, then usually things straighten themselves out with more gained than given.

My first experience of shopping with families came more than a decade ago when I volunteered to do the Warm the Children program. The program reminded me of how many there are in our county who need a little extra assistance to keep children warm during the winter season. At that time, so many had lost jobs and what was once taken for granted was not there for many.

The program, then instituted by the Hillsdale Daily News and the Hillsdale County Community Action Agency, provided many disadvantaged children facing the cold season with a little more reassurance. As a volunteer shopper on my first experience, I was given the task to meet an assigned family at a store after determining a mutually agreeable time. I knew that with all the

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