

# The County Edge

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## Christmas for Katie's Kids

7-year-old raises funds for her sick peers

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Labor Day is for Jerry's kids and Christmas is for Katie's kids.

Sure Jerry Lewis has long been doing wonders toward finding a cure for muscular dystrophy with his annual telethon. But, there's a new fundraising kid on the block and she has kids too. Meet Katie Greene, a Weddington 7-year-old first grader. Before Christmas last year, she had an idea.

"I found a toy and then it just came to me," Katie said. "I wanted to give presents to all of the sick children around the world."

Her parents found this to be a good time to teach Katie the value of working in manageable bites.

"We thought that (all children worldwide) might be a little too big a scope," said Dean Greene, her father.

They decided to focus on gravely ill children confined to the hospital during the holidays, thus they turned their attention to the Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte. Suddenly Katie began to learn about children suffering from diseases like leukemia and cancer. She has since learned other harsh reali-



ties about the children too sick for her to meet personally.

"We can't just give out toys because we have germs," Katie said. "We would make them more sick."

Katie focuses on raising money throughout the year before heading out

**See Katie's Kids, page 3**

### Katie's Kids

for the shopping spree for her kids.

"All year long when she would get a little bit of money, she would put it in her pig," said Liz Greene, her mother.

"I'd put it in my piggy-bank for my kids," Katie echoed.

Within the first three days the idea was born, Katie had raised \$160 cash. An email blast bagged another \$500. Once people realize what Katie's trying to do, many reach in their pockets to help. Even an employee at one of the stores donated \$10 toward her mission.

When they collected their financial goal, they headed out for the big shop about a week before Christmas. Stores like Michael's fared well as Katie amassed two full buggies.

"They (kids) really like kits, like art sets, games, and crafts," Katie said. "I'm not too good with the prices."

"That's where mom and dad come in," Liz added.

Katie has quickly learned that while folks tend to make sure younger children get toys, too often young teens are overlooked. She's found gift cards are best for the older kids.

All of the gifts last year were placed in two large sacks and dropped off at the hospital. To prevent the spread of germs, the gifts are not wrapped. Hospital staff still has to sanitize the gifts before distribution.



**Katie Greene, 7, opens her piggy bank, on the counter above, to shop for patients at Levine Children's Hospital. She enjoyed it so much last year that she wanted to do it again.**

Even the Levine Children's Hospital staff is amazed at what Katie has been able to accomplish.

"To be so young and helping with children, it's truly amazing," said Deana Williams, hospital volunteer manager. "To think that a 7-year-old is capable of doing so much for children her own age. It sounds like she has topped herself this year."

Katie's wants to raise \$2008 this year. Her goal next year is a buck more, which always makes it easy to remember. As of Monday (Dec. 8), she had collected \$1,125. She's gotten a couple hundred more in pledges that they're awaiting.

While mom and dad embrace their daughter's annual holiday mission, they also see how it has already benefited Katie.

"I think she's getting some good experience in what it takes to make things happen," Dean said. "It puts the focus on people besides herself. She gets more out of Christmas because of it."

Katie seems more interested in giving than receiving.

"I'm not doing this to get more gifts from Santa," Katie said. "I only want one gift - a Nintendo DS."

If you would like to help Katie share the spirit of the holiday season, donations may be mailed to Katherine Greene, Attn: Ms. Sam Sagatchi, First Citizens Bank, 5008 Forbes Road, Charlotte, NC 28277 or visit [www.katieskidz.org](http://www.katieskidz.org) for more information.